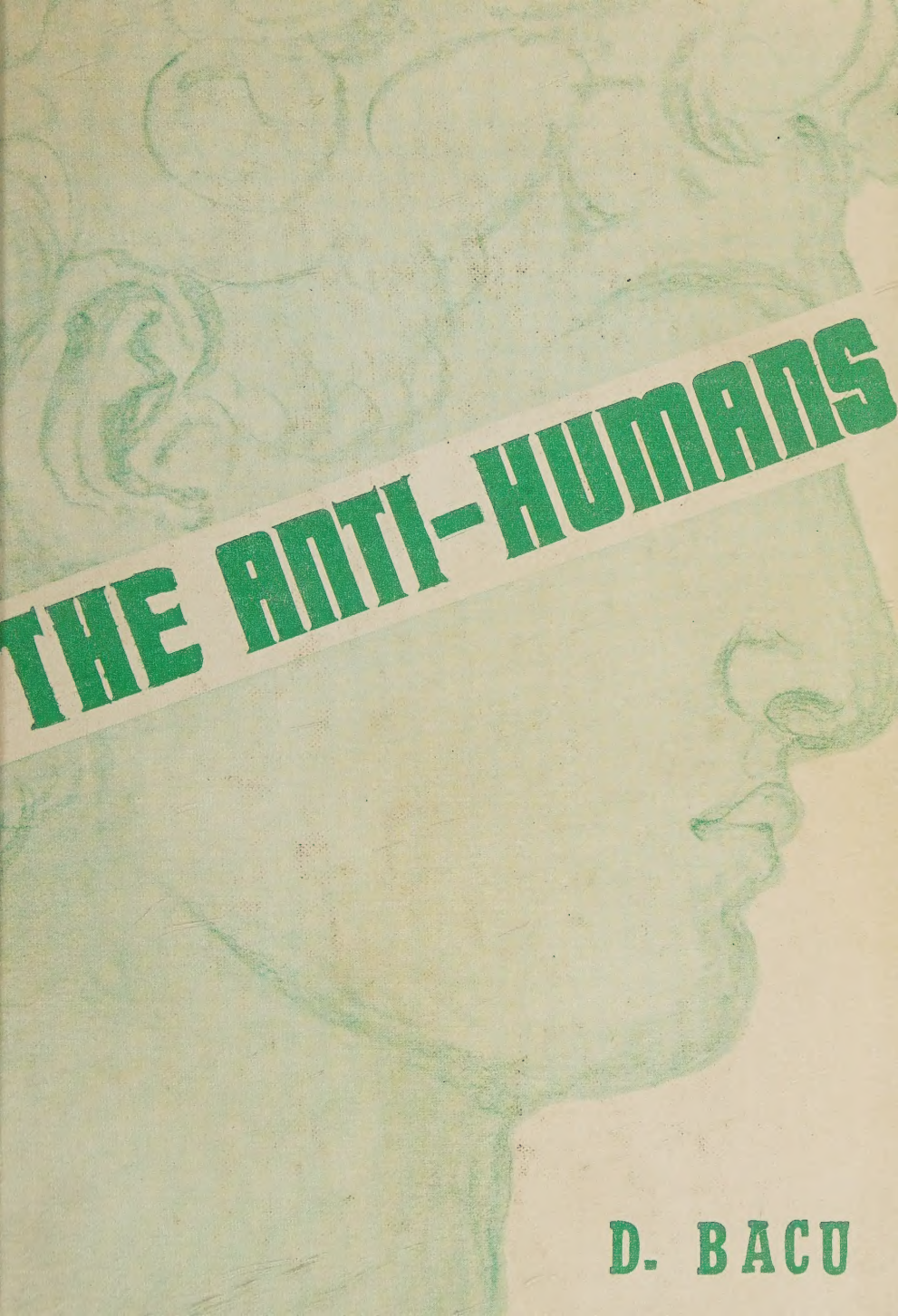
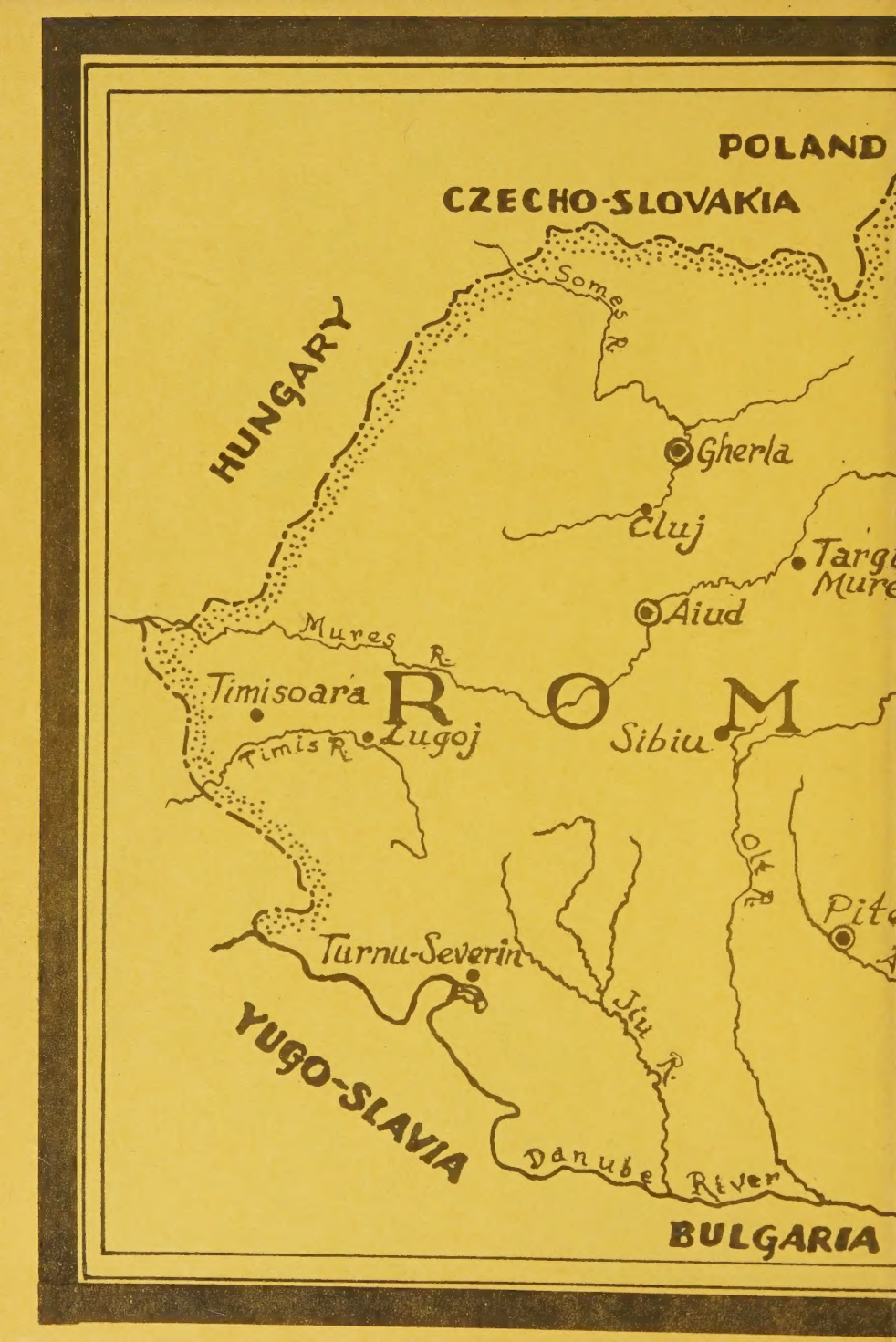


THE ANTI-HUMANS

D. BACU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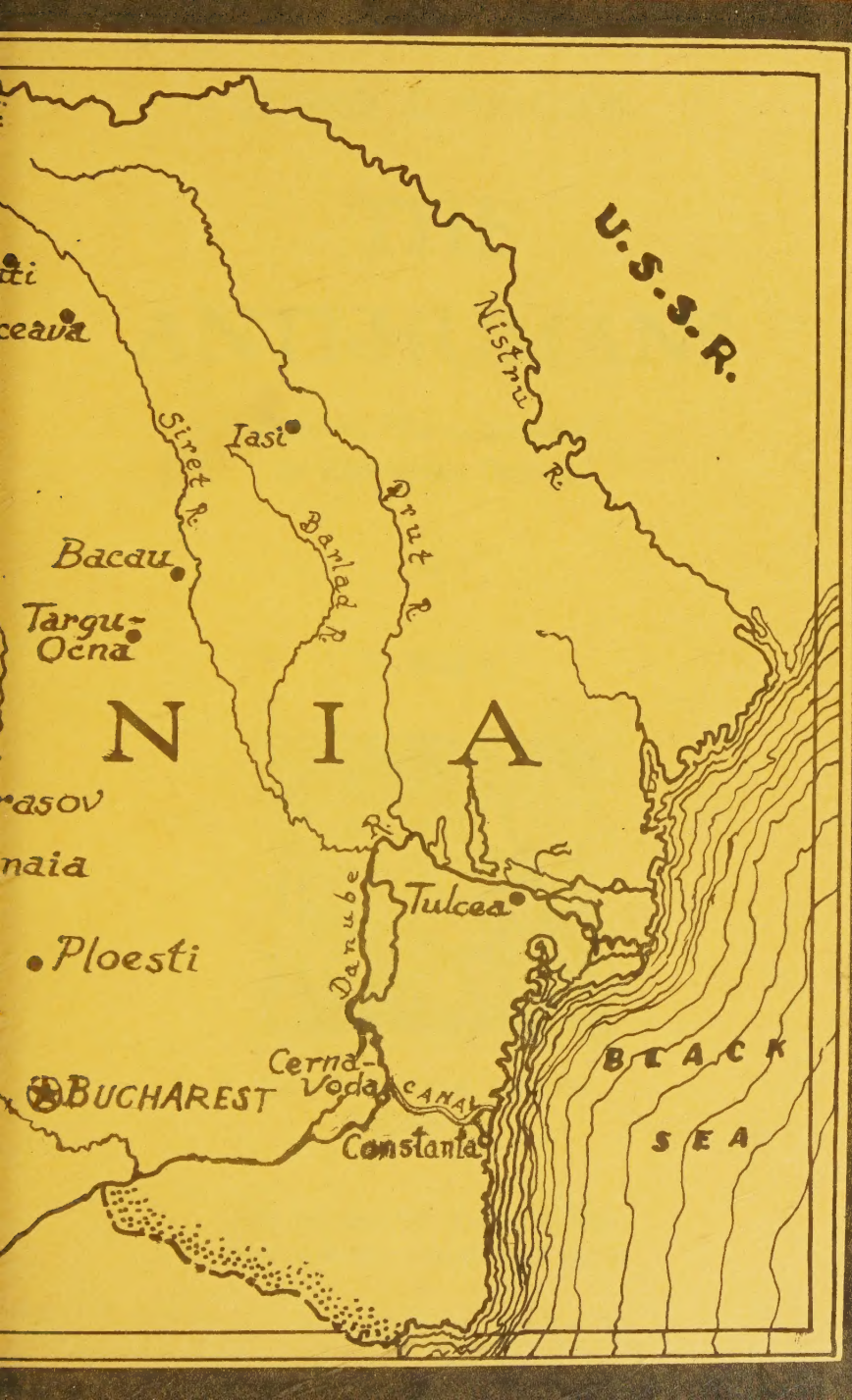
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Cerna-
Voda
CANAL
Constanta
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GEORGE E. MAYCOCK

THE ANTI-HUMANS

Student "Re-education" in Romanian Prisons

by

D. BACU

United States of America
MCMLXXI

SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS
ENGLEWOOD, COLORADO 80110

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Soldiers of the Cross
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The original Romanian manuscript, under the title, *Pitesti, Centru de Reeducare Studentesca,* was published at Madrid in 1963.

Law/Cons ——→ Law/Cons

The culs-de-lampe are authentic Romanian designs and sketches.

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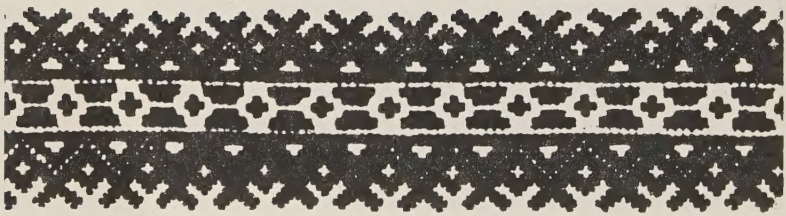

In Memoriam

DR. SIMIONESCU

ŞERBAN, GHEORGHE

GAFENCU

LIMBEREA, PAUL

OPRIŞAN, CONSTANTIN

ONAC

et caeterorum

Books by the Same Author

AIUD, poems Colection DACOROMANIA, Madrid 1961

ACOLO ŞEZUM ŞI PLÂNSEM, poems
Colection DACOROMANIA, Madrid 1964

INTRODUCTION

The author of this book, a Romanian born in Greek territory, went to Romania for his university education and there became a member of the anti-Communist organization that flourished in that nation before and during the tragic and fratricidal Second World War. After the Bolshevik conquest of Romania, the Soviets, undoubtedly on orders from their masters, maintained a pretense that their occupation was merely temporary and further disguised their purposes by keeping on the throne as King of Romania the legitimate heir, a young man who was merely a puppet in their hands, but served to give to the people an illusive hope that Romania, though devastated and impoverished, might again become a free nation. In this hope, of course, the Romanians (like many other captive peoples) were encouraged by the governments of the Western nations that had won the military victory. Those governments, especially in the United States, maintained a pretense that they were not the servants of the Bolsheviks' masters, and, whenever they deemed it expedient to administer a little verbal paregoric to their own population, manufactured oratory about "defending the Free World" and "containing Communism." Americans, who were so charmed by those phrases that they did not notice what their own government was doing, cannot blame the Romanians (or the others) for having supposed that the official verbiage was an indication of national policy.

During the early years of Soviet occupation, therefore, the Romanian people entertained delusive hopes of eventual liberation, and the author of this book accordingly remained in Romania, his true fatherland. When he was at last arrested

and imprisoned on suspicion of holding opinions inimical to Bolshevism, he, luckily, suffered only the excruciating tortures and hardships that are normal in what is called a Great Society. During his imprisonment, however, he had by chance an opportunity to learn of an experiment conducted on a select group of young men, and he had the acumen and patience to discover precisely what that experiment was. In this book he discloses for the first time the facts about a practice of which the peoples of the West still know nothing.

Bacu speaks only of what he knows — of what he witnessed with his own eyes and learned from the lips of men who had, despite themselves, been stripped of their humanity by an infallible scientific technique. His subject, therefore, is what the Bolsheviks secretly did to human beings in the prison at Pitesti* from 1949, when the experiment began, to 1951, when it seems to have been temporarily discontinued for some reason unknown.

What is described in these pages is not, however, an isolated event. Everyone who has had experience in military intelligence dealing with the Bolsheviks, or who has made a close study of information that is available from little known but authentic sources, will recognize in Bacu's pages a detailed description of a technique that the implacable enemies of mankind have used in many lands — perhaps in all countries that are officially Communist — for many years. The military intelligence agencies of Western nations have long known that a film demonstrating basic Pavlovian procedures was produced in Russia for training the Bolshevik secret police in

*With the exceptions of names of places (e.g., Bucharest) and persons (e.g., King Carol) that have well-known English forms, Romanian proper names in this volume are given in their Romanian spelling, but without the diacritical marks that are used in Romanian. To avoid excessive expense in setting type, the use of these marks had to be restricted to actual quotations from Romanian and the index, to which the reader is referred for the exact form of names and titles requiring diacritics.

1928, and that the intelligence service of at least one nation succeeded in obtaining a copy of that film. After the notorious "purge" trials in Russia in 1936, when the masters of that country for some reason thought it advisable to exhibit to the world their ability to elicit the most incredible confessions from highly-placed and hardened Bolsheviks, intelligent observers naturally wondered what means could have been employed to produce such amazing results. Certain Western intelligence services sought to ascertain what means had been used, and eventually ascertained them in sufficient detail to show that the essentials of the method were precisely those that Mr. Bacu has described for us.

Military intelligence services naturally do not publish what they have learned by their secret and often perilous operations. Perhaps the first hint of the new method given to the general public came from George Orwell, who, in his *1984,* portrayed the internationalists' Utopia and described some parts of the Communist technique, eliminating much that was too realistic for the taste of the reading public at that time, and replacing it with some episodes that could give a dramatic touch to what was in reality unspeakably vile and interminably monotonous. From *1984,* however, an alert reader could have surmised much that was left unsaid. Since then, confirmatory evidence has become available from many sources, often fragmentary, for victims who have the stamina to tell what was done to them may nevertheless be understandably reticent about the worst aspects of the degradation imposed on them. They often censor their reports, to avoid harrowing unendurably the feelings of a humane reader or arousing total disbelief in tender-minded individuals from whom miseducation or innate sentimentality has concealed the ultimate horrors that lie hidden in creatures anatomically indistinguishable from human beings.

It almost never happens that we have a report from a survivor who at the time observed and interviewed the piteous

victims of scientific bestiality, but, by a lucky chance, himself escaped the traumatic and mind-destroying shock of the torments they had undergone. That is what makes the book here translated from the Romanian unique. Bacu, to whom we owe our only authoritative report on the "Pitesti Phenomenon,"* was such a survivor.

In these pages, the reader will, for the first time, have at his disposal a fairly complete account of Bolshevik techniques of dehumanization, including some details, here mentioned as delicately as possible, of which we do not like to think. On these, Bacu does not insist, but you will see their import. One aspect concerning which he is silent is the sexual torments that form a standard part of the Bolshevik method. That is a large omission, but scholars who have had the fortitude to study the works of the celebrated "Marquis" de Sade† and his peers will readily perceive what was involved, while a specific report here would not only sicken most readers, but would prevent the distribution of this book through the United States mails.‡

This account, as I have said, deals with prisons in Romania, but the procedures used there have been and are used wherever

*[Mr. Heath wrote before the publication, late in 1969, of Dr. Ion Carja's *Intoarcerea din Infern: amintirile unui detinut din inchisorile Romaniei bolsevizate* (Madrid, Editura "Dacia"), a less detailed and explicit book in its description of the methods used. — *Editor.*]

†Donatien Alphonse Sade (1740-1814), to whom we owe the word *sadism*, was condemned to death by French courts for rape, murder by poison, and almost unbelievable torture of persons whom he kidnapped for that purpose, but the execution of the sentence was delayed by strange influences until he was liberated from prison by the French Revolution, during which he was honored and admired for his orations about "equality" and "brotherhood." Napoleon had him put in an insane asylum.

‡[Mr. Heath did not anticipate the full effect of decisions by the Supreme Court in Washington. The mails — and the newsstands and the public schools — are now open to every conceivable obscenity that the Jews in the United States find it profitable to publish. American publishers would probably enjoy the same immunity. — *Editor.*]

the anti-humans have gained control. Identical procedures, together with such improvements as may have been suggested by their experiments and delights in Romania and other captive nations, will be used everywhere that their power is extended — including, of course, the United States, if that nation reaches the goal toward which it is presently moving at a vertiginous speed.

If the Americans succumb, they will remember this book as a prophecy that was completely fulfilled.

* * * * *

Apart from its value to Americans as foreshadowing things to come — certain to come, if the operations now in progress in the United States are carried to a successful conclusion — this book, although not couched in the technical terminology of psychology and psychiatry, should be of absorbing interest to everyone who, regardless of his political desires or prognostications, is sincerely interested in study of the human consciousness. It delineates the result of a crucial experiment that could not have been performed on Occidentals outside Soviet territory.

This book is a landmark in the broad field now generally designated by a term adapted from the Russian, *psychopolitics.* Psychopolitics, a technology rather than a science since it is a practical application of data obtained by research in several sciences, may be defined as the art of controlling a nation by controlling the minds of the politically dominant majority of its population.

As a designation, psychopolitics is preferable to *psychological warfare,* which, though correct, is often taken to mean only operations directed against an enemy nation in the course of armed conflict. An excellent example of such propaganda

attacks is President Wilson's famous "fourteen points," a group of fairy-stories about the peace and justice that the American Santa Claus had in his bag for good little boys and girls in Europe.* That high-sounding nonsense, which seemed plausible to persons addicted to idealistic fantasies and romantic fiction, is credited with having broken the will of the German people and induced them to surrender in 1918, after which, of course, it was easy to inflict on them suffering and starvation, Bolshevik outbreaks, and finally a monetary inflation so enormous that the international people then in Germany could "legally" appropriate most of the property in Germany that they had not already acquired, "legality" being observed by handing a few American dollars to famished and despairing Germans in return for land, buildings, or factories worth a thousand or a million times that price.

The "fourteen points" are justly regarded as one of the great triumphs of psychological warfare, but under modern conditions verbal bombardments, unlike artillery fire, cannot be aimed in one direction. Clever as the "fourteen points"

*It is probably true, but irrelevant, that Wilson half-believed himself when he spun his rhetorical fantasies; if he did, he was selected for the presidency precisely because he had that capacity for self-intoxication. Colonel Curtis B. Dall in his excellent book (*F. D. R.*, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1967, p. 137) reports that a prominent Jew, who had been an eye-witness and a kind of errand boy for his elders, boasted that in 1912, while Wilson was being trained for the presidency, Bernard Baruch, one of the great Jewish satraps stationed in the United States, used to lead Wilson about, "like a poodle on a string," and make him recite at Democratic Headquarters, while Baruch's fellows were egging on Theodore Roosevelt, whose candidacy, of course, ensured the popular votes for Wilson needed to make Wilson's appointment seem "democratic." We may be sure that Fido Wilson learned how to sit up and speak "new freedom," "make the world safe for democracy," and the like to the satisfaction of his masters and trainers before they had him perform before the footlights for the edification of Americans who imagined that they had selected (elected) him as their Leader. What Fido thinks while he responds to his cues and performs on the stage is of interest only to Fido's biographers and to psychologists.

were, we may legitimately wonder whether they would have made the German populace simper, if the populace had not been made susceptible to such gabble by the long and patient work of enemy aliens and their hirelings. What is more significant, substantially the same drivel was used, through Wilson and other mouthpieces, to pep up the American people and make them glad to furnish cannon fodder and money to "make the world safe for democracy" by devastating Europe in a "war to end wars." Wilson's ideological barrage was directed against Americans as much as against Germans, and we may wonder which nation, in the long run, was the more damaged.

Under modern conditions, psychological warfare is necessarily waged by a government against its own subjects and only secondarily against a foreign country, and the real beneficiary is invariably the international nation that controls both sides in the war that it has arranged for its own purposes. Only if we keep that fact in mind can we use the term *psychological warfare* correctly.

The tactical and strategic use of psychopolitics that the Soviet recommends to its allies and agents in the United States and other nations of the West yet uncaptured has been set forth in a remarkable document of which several copies appear to have reached the United States in the 1930's and later. It is most widely known and generally available as a booklet, *Brain-washing, a Synthesis of the Russian Textbook on Psychopolitics,* with an introduction by the Reverend Mr. Kenneth Goff, who was a member of the Communist Party in the United States from 1936 to 1939, and who had studied psychopolitics in a special Communist training school in Milwaukee. He states that the textbook, although issued for the use of English-speaking students in Lenin University, was also "used in America for the training of Communist cadre." An almost identical text was obtained from a confidential source in 1955

by a Professor Charles Stickley of New York City and published in that year.* A quite similar text, with only minor variations, came into the possession of Mr. Louis Zoul, the well-known author of *Thugs and Communists,* who published in *The Soviet Inferno* the greater part of the text divided into short sections, each of which is followed by copious corroboration from many sources, such as Anatoli Granovsky's *I Was an NKVD Agent* and Captain Robert A. Winston's *The Pentagon Case,* as well as letters from individuals who escaped from Cuba and other proletarian paradises.†

In the publications before Mr. Zoul's, the text is preceded by a commendatory address, evidently delivered at Lenin University by Lavrentiy Beria, the Jew who was Head Butcher in the Russia satrapy from 1938 — when he liquidated another Jew, the unspeakable Yezhov — until 1953, when he was in turn liquidated by another and even more ferocious Jew. The date of the oration is not given, but it would seem to be earlier than 1938 and to come from the time when Beria, in addition to feeding his blood-lust in Transcaucasia, was presiding over the manufacture of "historical studies" for the use of educated simpletons in the United States and elsewhere.

The "synthesis," which deals with the uses of psychopolitics rather than technical details, is obviously a condensation and omits most of the Marxist jargon with which admittedly Communist publications for the general public are almost invariably

*Mr. Goff's booklet is available from *Soldiers of the Cross,* $1.00. It is hard to tell which of the many other printings are still in print. One, containing an excellent introduction by Eric D. Butler, the well-known Australian publicist and editor of the *New Times* of Melbourne, was published by the Victorian League of Rights in Melbourne, Victoria, in 1956, then priced at 4/-. Another, with a foreword discussing the Soviet textbook as an obvious source of the "mental health" agitation in the United States, was published at about the same time by the American Public Relations Forum, Burbank, California; $1.00.

†*The Soviet Inferno* is published by Public Opinion, P. O. Box 4044, Long Island City, New York; 2d edition, 1967, $2.00.

larded.* It does, however, maintain the pretense, discarded only on the very highest levels, that psychological warfare against Western nations is directed from Moscow in the interests of Russia, and that the goal is the destruction of "capitalism." The text, though candid enough in treating the American people as enemies who must be destroyed or enslaved, was evidently designed for students who would forget that the Bolshevik capture of Russia was, of course, planned, financed, and directed by the Schiffs, Warburgs, and other wealthy Jews then living in the United States, who used their control over the governments of Germany, Great Britain, France, and the United States to ensure the Bolsheviks' triumph

*Marxist doctrine, though very useful for befuddling low-grade minds (which normally accept as profound any highly touted mass of intricate verbiage that they are unable to untangle), is believed only by the lowest ranks in the Communist hierarchy. As Duane Thorin perceived when he was a prisoner of the Communists in China (*A Ride to Panmunjon*, Chicago, 1956; p. 39): "Intellects that failed to see through the falsities of communism were so arrested that they were of only limited use in the totalitarian state." Persons with such inert minds are, naturally, not promoted to really responsible positions, no matter how hard they work or how sadistic they are. The policy of denying them promotion, which is certainly sound from an organizational standpoint, has led to some defections — which are of no real consequence, since the dullards do not know very much to reveal and they are easily replaced — although, where circumstances make it convenient, such tools are usually scrapped and liquidated when they begin to show discontent or claim promised rewards — as you will see in Chapter XXVIII of the present book. In the middle echelons of the organization, comparable to company-grade and field-grade officers in an army, the ambitious career men, naturally too intelligent to take their own propaganda seriously, are careful to use the official "ideology" even among themselves, partly for exercise in unremitting hypocrisy, and partly because they find Marxist dialectics a game as entertaining as chess. This sport, which may be played for high stakes, gives rise to clever syllogisms about "deviationism," "Stalinism," etc., which often trap the players. A good example may be found in the work of the Soviet physician, J. Landowsky, available in a Spanish translation, *Sinfonia en rojo mayor* (Madrid, 1949), of which one chapter has appeared in English, translated by George Knupffer, *Red Symphony* (London, 1968).

over the Russians.† The students were also expected to believe or pretend that "capitalism" included the international lords of finance, who have always found their Soviet colony an extremely profitable investment both in itself and as a means of exploiting their control over the money and banking of nations that are told that they are "free."

The text of *Brain-washing*‡ deals primarily with means of inducing insanity or idiocy in selected victims and is thus

†Pretense is often dropped on the highest levels in talks with outsiders who are too well informed to be deceived. Prince Sturdza, in the authentic text of his memoirs (see the footnote on p. xxxv below) pp. 346 f., reports that when he came to New York in 1929 to obtain a loan for the Romanian government, he had to plead his country's case with the mighty Jewish lawyer who represented the great international banking houses of New York that had directed the Bolshevik seizure of Russia. This lawyer, known as Louis Marshall (a good Scottish name!), was, as Prince Sturdza says, "a second Bernard Baruch, less conspicuous but just as influential as the famous proconsul of Judaism (rather than Jewry) in the United States." (A proconsul, it will be remembered, was in the Roman Empire a governor sent into conquered territory to direct and supervise the native governments, which were allowed some autonomy in local matters that did not directly affect the interests of the Empire.) Marshall, like other great potentates, disdained to play a comedy with the suppliant; he took Prince Sturdza to the window, pointed at Wall Street, and said with lordly bluntness: *"Look what we can do for a country we like; in Russia we have shown the world what we can do to a country and government we hate."* Prince Sturdza adds, "Mr. Marshall, a few days later, reiterated that statement to Mr. Gheorghe Boncescu, the Financial Adviser of our [Romanian] Legation [in Washington]." Marshall naturally thought it best to profess a liking for the United States, a country which he and his fellows were about to afflict with an "economic depression," neatly arranged by a squeeze through their banks, to ruin influential natives, appropriate their property through foreclosures, and create the atmosphere of crisis and poverty that would facilitate the "election" of their talented servant, Franklin Roosevelt.

‡The word *brain-washing* is "an English translation of a Chinese euphemism," according to an article by Professor Revilo P. Oliver in the Birch magazine, *American Opinion*, November 1964, pp. 29-40. This article is an excellent discussion of the whole subject in brief compass, and gives some telling examples of tricks used in public schools and newspapers, but unfortunately fails to treat the strictly scientific (psychological) principles of propaganda, which can (and indeed *must*) be used to create "public opinion"

directly relevant to the Pitesti experiment described in the present book. It is not, however, a complete treatise, even in outline, of psychopolitics; it barely alludes to very important weapons of psychological warfare. We cannot digress to discuss those weapons here, but no one should overlook the efficacy of scientifically produced propaganda* in the United States, where it is virtually a monopoly of the Jews, who, through advertising, can control the ever diminishing number of newspapers, periodicals, and broadcasting stations that they do not own outright. The best strategic propaganda is pro-

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in modern circumstances. The techniques of propaganda are no more "Communist" than rifles or airplanes; like all weapons, they work for whoever uses them, but do not hit the target, if they are not well aimed. In all wars, victory goes to the side that has the best weapons and uses them most expertly.

*The best technical treatises on the subject are in French: Jean Stoetzel, *Esquisse d'une theorie des opinions* (Paris, 1943), and Jacques Ellul, *Propagandes* (Paris, 1962). One cannot too much emphasize the fact, ignored by Professor Oliver and other American writers, that the techniques of propaganda, like the technology that makes possible television and computers, have *no* political or social content. The results that are obtained by means of a television station or a computer depend entirely on *who* uses it for *what* purpose. It is true that all technological advances place the people who are too stupid or lazy to use them at a hopeless disadvantage. A nation that neglected or refused to use airplanes, for example, would necessarily be defeated in war and disappear (except as a political fiction, if that suited the purpose of the conquerors), but that is not the fault of the Wright Brothers and General Sikorsky. The effectiveness of propaganda, in the strict sense of that word, depends largely upon what is technically called *pre-propaganda*, i.e., the ideas injected into the minds of children by their education. In the United States, the public schools were early converted into a very efficient machine to stunt the minds, pervert the morals, and destroy the self-respect of children, but the Americans seem pleased with the results, even after they have had a preliminary view of them in the unwashed derelicts, sexual perverts, drug-addicts, and crazed revolutionaries that their public schools are systematically producing at their expense. It seems likely, therefore, that the Americans no longer have either the intelligence or the will to resist their enemies, and will dumbly acquiesce in the fate prepared for them. Since the number of Americans who are still permitted to have liquid capital is very small, the ever increasing number of foresighted refugees who are fleeing from the United States to other countries is significant, though statistically small.

duced by manufacturing impassioned argument and violent controversy on "both sides" of a given question, so that the public accepts as unquestionable fact everything that "both sides" in the contrived controversy seem to take for granted.

Propaganda, if properly used, can always control a majority of a given population, but will always be ineffective against both the critical intelligence of independent minds and the faith of a religion that the propaganda line openly contradicts. Although the minds can usually be hired, and theologians can be employed to "modernize" the religion, there will always be troublesome exceptions, even after a century of strenuous effort. In the conquest of a country by psychopolitics, the exceptions must be put under physical restraint and either liquidated or made harmless imbeciles or, if possible, converted into useful zombies.

This is the problem with which the text of *Brain-washing* is principally concerned, and with particular reference to the United States, where naked terrorism through the government was impossible in the 1930's, and is not yet feasible, even today. The principles expounded in the text and the methods suggested are indisputably authentic: they are the standard Soviet application of the discoveries made in Russia, before the Bolshevik conquest, by Dr. Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, whose scientific talents the shrewd Bolsheviks were able to take over and put to their own use.† You will find the essentials stated in the text.

The "synthesis" of the textbook on psychopolitics recommends and prescribes for use against Americans a propaganda campaign for "mental health" to obtain from the stupid Americans acquiescence in legislation to authorize the "legal" kidnapping of troublesome Americans and their incarceration in

†For an account of the way in which this was done, and a transcription of the preliminary negotiations with Dr. Pavlov, see Dr. Boris Sokoloff's authoritative report in his book, *The White Nights* (New York, 1956), especially pp. 66-72.

prisons (to be called "hospitals") in which "trained psychiatrists" of alien origin and their brutish assistants can induce insanity, imbecility, or, if necessary, death by means of scientific tortures, especially "electric shock therapy" (which can be used to break the backbone), or mind-destroying drugs, such as the now famous L.S.D., which was only later produced by the Weizmann Laboratories in Israel and shipped to the United States for surreptitious sale to adolescents and children whose minds had been given a preliminary conditioning in the public schools.

In the 1930's, the "mental health" scheme would doubtless have seemed preposterous and ridiculous to the stolid and happy-go-lucky Americans, if they had heard of it. It has now, however, been almost completely implemented, and has already been used in a considerable number of cases, a few of which have attracted some little attention, especially that of the abduction of General Edwin A. Walker, which failed because he had prominent friends who acted before he could be destroyed, of Frank Britton, who had dared to criticize Jews and was effectively silenced, and of the journalist, Fred Seelig, who, through a miscalculation, was prematurely released and had time to narrate his experience in print before he died.* We may expect, however, that the procedure will be used with increasing frequency and less secrecy, and that soon it will be mere routine for Americans who make themselves obnoxious to their masters (for example, by claiming that the "United

*Frederick Seelig, *Destroy the Accuser*, with a foreword by Westbrook Pegler and a commentary by Dr. Revilo P. Oliver (Miami, Florida, Freedom Press, 1967). This book, which I have seen, has become unprocurable, and I do not have a copy at hand. The author is said to have died of heart failure in Valparaiso, Indiana, not long after his book was published, and a letter to the publisher was returned to me with the notation "unknown"! The book, as I remember, contained some details about the eagerness of the staff at Springfield to start torturing General Walker, who was kidnapped through the complicity of Federal judges (compare Judge Petrescu in Chapter XXVIII of the present book) while the author was a prisoner there.

Nations" or the Federal Reserve System or the Marxist income tax is "un-Constitutional," or by pretending that God's People do not have a right to use lesser breeds for their own profit and fun) to be hauled to Springfield, Missouri, or some other equivalent of Pitesti on the western side of the Atlantic, and there, with "loving care," be restored to "mental health" as vertebrate vegetables.

Despite the panoply of refined techniques, such as surgical operations on the brain ("lobotomy"), excruciating electrical torments, and subtle drugs, it is noteworthy that even in the United States at the present time the favored procedure is to subject inconvenient Americans to a kind of *physical* degradation of the same kind as that used at Pitesti, though, for some reason, less intense and systematic. A typical case is that of the American journalist, who, having come upon evidence that compromised the nest of homosexual perverts in Washington,

> was kidnapped by a U. S. Marshal and hustled to Springfield, Missouri, where he was stripped and thrust naked into a small cell, of which the floor and three sides were of rough concrete, while the fourth was a ponderous steel door. There was no furnishing of any kind in the cell, and only two openings, one a round hole in the floor leading to a sewer, and the other a ventilator, through which were sent blasts of frigid air alternating with shrill, deafening, cacophonous, and rhythmically disoriented "music," intended both to damage the auditory nerves and to make sure that the poor wretch in the cell could not possibly fall asleep as he stretched his naked body on the rough concrete. Naturally, the victim's skin, abraded by the concrete, soon developed open sores, and his despairing mind eventually took refuge in periods of total stupor that even the howling din coming through the ventilator could not break. After being deprived of food and water for three days and nights, the victim was forced to obtain them by crawling on his hands and knees in minimum time to a pot placed on the sill of the briefly opened door.*

*The unfortunate journalist was almost certainly Frederick Seelig, but, for reasons stated in the preceding note, I have had to quote

In the United States it has thus far been necessary to use a certain amount of discretion and pretense in the destruction of anti-Communist nuisances, but in Romania, after the completion of the take-over, more effective secrecy made precautions less necessary.

The Pitesti experiment dispensed with such complicated and expensive paraphernalia as electrical apparatus, brain surgeons, and specially prepared drugs. It used only the simplest tools, everywhere procurable: clubs, the bestiality of degenerates, the weakness of human nature when attacked by Pavlov's methods. The results of the experiment were, as you will see, impressive and appalling. They proved that *no one* could resist the techniques of the Anti-Humans, but whether the experiment was *entirely* a success is a question that must be left to your decision on the basis of your estimate of what the experimenters hoped to discover or prove, while a critique of their methodology must be left to the few Occidentals who have expert knowledge of psychobiological processes.

What no reader of this book can fail to perceive, if only for a moment before he tries to forget the "unthinkable," is the unspeakably vile and sadistic lusts of the contrivers of the experiment at Pitesti — appetites so foreign to everything that he regards as human that the creatures who are animated by them can be described only as the "enemies of mankind," or, concisely, as the *Anti-Humans.*

What is described in this book happened in Romania after the Bolsheviks discarded the pretense that they were tenderhearted humanitarians bringing "equality" and "civil rights" to the downtrodden victims of the wicked "Fascists" and "anti-Semites." Before and even after the Anti-Humans stopped

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from the article in *American Opinion,* November 1964, p. 31, mentioned above. The writer of that article, Professor Oliver, does not give the victim's name, but the circumstances make the identification certain. One wonders how (or *why*) Oliver's article was printed in a Birch publication.

dissembling, some Romanians were, by foresight or good luck, able to escape westward, and even to make their sufferings known, as Mr. Bacu has done in this book, to peoples not yet imprisoned.

When the United States has progressed to the point reached by Romania in 1948, there will be no place on earth to which Americans can flee, and there will be no one to hear their screams.

* * * * *

All that remains to be said to introduce Mr. Bacu's book to American readers can be expressed in a few pages giving such information about Romania as will enable Americans to appreciate the *human* drama — the pathos and the tragedy — of this narrative.

Romania was for centuries, even while it was under the comparatively mild and humane oppression of the Moslems, the easternmost land of the West. The nation was born of the Roman conquest of Dacia (101-106), and there Rome left an imprint that has thus far been indelible and a spiritual heritage that survives in the heart of the people.

The civilization of Romania was the civilization of the West. The names of men and places may be unfamiliar to your eyes, but the people you will recognize as your own kind and their thoughts will be the thoughts of the Christian West.

There is, however, one peculiarity of Romania that requires some preliminary explanation, for it is the very opposite of what contemporary experience in the United States — and, for that matter, in most Western nations to varying degrees — makes us take for granted.

The persons whom the Bolshevik beasts selected for dehumanization were a clearly defined group: university students. That was because in Romania, in sharp antithesis to

DACIA (Romania of today) in the ROMAN Empire, 250 A.D.

what we see in the United States today, university students were a highly respected elite and included men who combined the vigor and ardor of youth with unsurpassed patriotism and a lucid conservatism, intellectual and religious.

This fact, which will seem so paradoxical to Americans today, was the result of two concurrent factors.

Romania was essentially a land of peasants with limited industrial and commercial classes. The four universities, at Iasi (founded by Prince Cuza in 1860), Bucharest (founded in 1864), Cluj (1872) and Cernauti (1875), each divided into several faculties (theology, philosophy, letters, science, law, and medicine), were open to all who had completed their studies in a lyceum (*liceu,* translated 'high school' in the present book). The lyceum had relatively high standards, requiring, for example, the learning of French and German as well as either Latin and Greek or English and Italian, and weeded out the intellectually incompetent.* Only a small fraction, therefore, of Romanian youth entered the universities, and consequently a considerable prestige was attached to the very word *student* (i.e. university student, since a pupil in a secondary school was an *elev*). It suggested a considerable intellectual ability and a serious purpose, for the students in Romanian universities were, for the most part, the children of hard-working peasants or of earnest professional men; the scions of the wealthy more often than not went abroad for their education.

*Romanian children began the formal study of their first foreign language, French, in the year corresponding to the fifth grade in American public schools. By the time that they reached the point that corresponds to the first year of high school in the United States, Romanian children were reading Cicero in Latin and mastering trigonometry. Such progress is, of course, merely normal in serious educational institutions. The public schools in the United States, on the other hand, are designed to blight native intelligence and produce a nation of nitwits that can be easily manipulated and fleeced by professional "educators" and other shysters.

To this fact we must add a second, that will be even more astonishing to the American reader. The Romanian universities were as much centers of ardent patriotism and conservatism as American colleges, in the period of 1920-50, were centers of internationalism and socialism. The prevailing atmosphere of staunch conservatism also distinguished Romanian universities from other European universities. For this there were several reasons.

Romania was essentially an agrarian country and a large percentage of the *studenti* had had closer contact with the realities of life than was usual in Germany and France. More important, Romania was a small nation with a clear consciousness of its national individuality as a Western nation, tracing its origins to the Roman conquest of Dacia, and encompassed by peoples of Byzantine, Slavic, or Oriental traditions. It had stubbornly maintained that consciousness through centuries of alien domination, attaining a precarious and transient independence in 1600, only to fall again under the rule of the Turks. After numerous interventions by Russia, the enemy of Turkey, and after many episodes of valiant resistance to both Russians and Turks, Romania, formed by the union of Wallachia and Moldavia, gained autonomy in 1859, but remained under the suzerainty of the Turkish Sultan, and did not become fully and formally independent until 1881. Independence so recently attained and constantly threatened remained in the Romanian mind the precious guerdon of nationality at a time when the larger nations of Europe were taking themselves and their prosperous perpetuity for granted.

Romania, moreover, had Russia on its eastern frontier — Russia which, in 1812, had seized and annexed Bessarabia, a region containing a large population of Romanian blood. After the International Conspiracy captured Russia in 1917, Romanians could not fail to know what the beasts did in Russia and especially in Bessarabia. Moreover, it was the Romanian

army that in August 1919 occupied Budapest and freed Hungary from the unspeakable vermin led by Israel Cohen, alias Bela Kun. The Romanians knew what Bolshevism was, and whence it sprang. In the United States, separated from the reality by thousands of miles and an infected press, many stupid or cunning professors could gabble about a "noble experiment" and a "people's regime," but in Romania such nonsense, so utterly at variance with observed reality, was recognized as either asinine or criminal.

To these considerations must be added another equally important. Although, as was to be expected, Romanian universities naturally tended to imitate the far older and venerable universities of the great European powers, especially Germany and France, there was a significant difference that limited the more deleterious aspects of that influence. The faculties of Romanian universities, especially Iasi and Bucharest, were predominantly composed of Romanians, whereas, of course, elsewhere in Europe university teaching had been invaded by large contingents of the international people. Before the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, the Jews, for the most part, had ignored Romania, an impoverished land under Turkish rule, and had by preference swarmed into nations where the prospects of easy pickings from the natives were far more attractive.* After 1829, hordes of Jews came over the borders, but, despite various efforts by France and Germany to procure for these intruders in Romania the privileged status they enjoyed elsewhere, Jews were, for all practical purposes, debarred from citizenship until 1923, when the Romanian government then in office yielded to the pressures of the "great powers".† It

*A concise account of this aspect of Romanian history will be found in the opening chapters of *L'Envoye de l'Archange* by the distinguished French authors, Jerome et Jean Tharaud (Paris, 1939).

†Strictly speaking, Romania, coerced by a scarcely veiled threat of invasion by Germany and Great Britain, in 1879 repealed the article in her constitution which, like the constitution of the State of Pennsylvania that was framed and adopted under the

thus happened that in Romania, unlike France and Germany, the universities were still largely staffed by men who in mind and spirit belonged to the nation, and they were not dominated by an alien race whose members can, with the facility of chameleons, take on the color of whatever the environment in which they choose to reside. In Romanian universities, therefore, patriotism was intellectually respectable, and, on the whole, taken for granted until 1918.

After 1918, although faculties remained largely Romanian, the situation became confused. Some professors seem to have been either bemused by the glib patter of Marxism, a "doctrine" cleverly designed to addle mediocre brains that can be fascinated by pseudo-intellectual verbiage, or intimidated by the Bolsheviks' boast that they represent a mysterious but irresistible "wave of the future." Many others, perhaps fearing for their comfort or lives, concealed their real sentiments and

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leadership of Benjamin Franklin, restricted citizenship to Christians. After 1879, the legal privileges of citizenship were available to all Jews, provided that they either (a) had served in the armed forces of Romania or (b) applied for such rights and were found on investigation not to be guilty of political or moral subversion and corruption. Naturally, only a few thousand thus obtained the legal status of citizens, and it was not until 1923 they could all swarm into Romanian politics and begin to take over the country "legally" by manipulating greedy politicians. Everyone knows that the Jews are, as they themselves frankly boast, an international race or "peopledom" who never become in fact citizens of the nations in which they find it profitable to dwell. As Albert Einstein said, "There is no such thing as a German Jew, Russian Jew, or American Jew: there are only Jews." Hundreds of the most accomplished and intellectually prominent Jews throughout the world have frankly said the same thing, and all the admitted Zionists have proclaimed it year after year, but, unaccountably, the people of the Christian West perversely refuse to believe them — and then secretly complain to one another in private that Jews are not good Christians and not good Englishmen or Americans. Although Europeans do understand that a European who lives in China is not a Chinaman, most of them have a curious mania to pretend that a Jew who resides in Europe is a European — and even a mania to punish other Europeans who will not join in the absurd pretense. The Jews, whose leaders have told the truth often enough, can scarcely be blamed for taking advantage of the folly of the peoples whom they despise and exploit.

remained silent or took refuge in ambiguous pronouncements. A few, however, fearlessly maintained Romanian traditions and asserted their intellectual integrity. They provided the inspiration for the patriotic and conservative movements among the university students.

The reaction of the students was doubtless hastened by a simple sociological pressure. The Jews, although they were numerically only a small part of the population even after the great influx at the end of the World War, swarmed into the universities and began to jostle out the natives. According to the official statistics, for example, in the spring semester of 1920 at the University of Cernauti there were enrolled in the College of Philosophy 574 Jews and only 174 Romanians; in the College of Law, 547 Jews and 234 Romanians. At the University of Iasi 831 Jews were enrolled in the College of Medicine as against 556 Romanians, and in the College of Pharmacy, 229 Jews and 97 Romanians.* These are, of course, some of the most striking disproportions, but everyone will see why, especially in such academic institutions, young Romanians, finding themselves a minority amidst a throng of pushing, versipellous, and disputatious aliens, and doubtless also often finding themselves eclipsed scholastically by the mental agility and Oriental subtlety of the Protean race, should have turned ardently to patriotic movements.

There was a further development that will be even more astonishing to the American reader. It may be that before the First World War in Romania, a largely peasant nation but recently emancipated from Moslem control, Christianity retained a greater vigor and commanded a more general piety than in other countries of Europe, though it would be difficult to make an accurate comparison between Romania and, for example, Brittany, Bavaria, or Piedmont. Romanian universities were, of course, profoundly affected by the intellectual

*These figures are quoted from official sources by Prof. Ion Gavenescul in his *Imperativul momentului istoric*, pp. 67 ff.

climate of the great European universities and necessarily reflected the dominant attitudes of thought, from German "idealism" to the "religion of humanity" preached by Auguste Comte in his more lucid intervals; from the stern pessimism of Schopenhauer to the graceful and universal irony of Anatole France. To a very large extent the intellectual life of Europe was dominated by the attitude that Christianity was an historical phenomenon characteristic of an age whose passing one might view with joy, indifference, or regret, but which, whether for better or worse, was passing ineluctably away: religion was a waning superstition that still had power only over the uneducated. These currents of European thought necessarily affected educated Romanians, who, as a matter of course, read and wrote French fluently and, in many cases, German also.

Romanians will, no doubt, variously estimate the direct effect on their intellectual life of the dire and immediate menace of Bolshevism in the period that followed the First World War. Certainly all intelligent Romanians could see that their enemies were anti-Christian — were in both word and deed frantic enemies of the Western World, whose culture had for fifteen centuries been specifically Christian, and whose nations had been so distinctively set apart from others by their religion that they had been little conscious of the underlying racial unity of the West. In the 1920's, it must be remembered, Bolshevik propaganda was stridently anti-Christian, denouncing religion as "the opiate of the people," signalizing its victories by massacring ecclesiastics, defiling shrines, and converting churches into stables or warehouses, and teaching militant atheism in its schools.* It was not until much later

*Hence the cliche, "atheistic Communism," that is still used in many conservative circles in the United States. To recapture the patriotic outlook of the 1920's, the reader will do well to turn to R. M. Whitney's fundamental *Reds in America* (New York, 1924), in which accurate analysis of Bolshevik plans (including the plans for the "Civil Riots" agitation of the 1960's) accompanies an implicit confidence that Christian Churches will remain Christian!

that the Bolsheviks could implement on any extensive scale their other and complementary technique of utilizing renegade ministers and priests to spread the germs of Bolshevism under the guise of a "social gospel" or "ecumenical Christianity." Until 1930, at least, the established Christian churches were almost universally regarded as a bulwark against the International Conspiracy. Furthermore, in 1919, the multitude of Jews residing in Romania, deeming a Bolshevik victory imminent, had prematurely and indiscreetly dropped their pretense and appeared openly as the instigators of "proletarian" riots and sabotage, and the suborners of violence and treason, not troubling to disguise their eager anticipation of a glorious butchery that would put the natives in their place. Thus the fundamental and necessary hostility between Christianity and the various doctrines of Judaism again made Christianity the symbol of Romanian nationalism as opposed to its foreign and domestic enemies.

In these circumstances, it was only to be expected that Romanian patriotic societies would be specifically Christian, but some, I suspect, used Christianity primarily as a symbol of their purpose. The first of the patriotic organizations was the Guard of the National Conscience (*Garda Constiintei Nationale*), founded by Constantin Pancu, a simple steelworker whom his fellows elected their leader, primarily to expose the nonsense of the "proletarian" propaganda with which the Bolsheviks were trying to confuse and utilize Romanian laborers — for the invariable but concealed Bolshevik purpose of ultimately reducing them to brutalized slavery.

In 1923, the National Christian Defense League (*Liga Apararii Nationale Crestine*) was founded by one of Romania's most distinguished scholars, A. C. Cuza, Professor of Law in the University of Iasi, with the discreet support of the internationally known historian, Prof. Nicolae Iorga, who is, perhaps, best known in the United States for his *History of the*

Byzantine Empire, which has appeared in several English editions.* A league headed by scholars of such eminence naturally had great prestige among university students and educated men in general and it became a force of very considerable political importance, particularly after it merged in 1935 with the political party headed by Octavian Goga, prominent poet, litterateur, and statesman. Although the National Christian Defense League sought the support of the sincerely religious, its inner direction was rationalistic, basing its avowed hostility to Jews and Bolsheviks on historical and scientific grounds. From all that I can learn, Professor Cuza's creed was essentially the elegant scepticism of Renan. Professor Iorga's historical works treat Christianity with a cold objectivity. And Octavian Goga, if correctly quoted by Jerome and Jean Tharaud, seems to have held at heart a view of Christianity similar to that set forth in Nietzsche's famous *Genealogy of Morals.*†

The greatest influence over the Romanian students at this juncture was undoubtedly exerted by Corneliu Z. Codreanu, the son of a teacher in a Moldavian secondary school. Born 13 September, 1899, he prepared himself in law at the University of Iasi, where he studied under Professor Cuza, and he later studied abroad in both Germany and France. A man of iron will, exalted faith, and ardent patriotism, Codreanu, after participating in the Guard of the National Conscience from its inception and in the National Christian Defense League, founded on 24 June, 1927 the Legion of Michael the Archangel (*Legiunea Archangelului Mihail*). The organization's

*Professor Iorga became Prime Minister of Romania for a time in 1931. An estimate of his conduct in office is beyond the scope of this notice. [His *History of Roumania,* translated by Joseph McCabe, was published in London in 1925. — *Ed.*]

†This sufficiently explains why there could be no cooperation between the Christian Defense League and Codreanu's Legion of Michael the Archangel, and it is not necessary to endorse the suspicions of Professor Cuza expressed by Ion Mota in an essay, "Legiunea si L.A.N.C.", in the volume *Corneliu Codreanu, prezent* (Madrid, 1966).

principles — an unlimited love of country, a code of personal honor and moral intransigence, the reciprocal loyalty of knighthood, and rigorous subordination of body to spirit — were all based by the founder on an absolute faith in Christ. The Legion was "indissolubly united under the aegis of God" and its members pledged themselves to sacrifice themselves without limit or reservation for God and Country. This was the movement that by its high and noble idealism attracted to itself all the young elite of the Romanian universities, won their unqualified allegiance, and largely dominated the thinking of even those who stood aloof or opposed it.

This is why the Romanian university students were, in contrast to those of other Western nations, profoundly Christian. I have been assured by Romanians that in many cases the students' firm religious convictions were shaped not so much by their families or by their churches as by the inspiration of Codreanu and the rigid Christian discipline he imposed on all his followers. There can be no doubt but that, from a strictly religious point of view, Codreanu's movement represented the greatest and most intense revival of the Christian faith in any nation during the Twentieth Century. Its influence on the spiritual and intellectual life of the elite among young Romanians was enormous and transcendent. That is what makes the Legion unique among the nationalist movements of our age. The combination of ardent faith and intense nationalism produced a generation of heroes. The Legion, also known as the Iron Guard (*Garda de Fier*), sent an expeditionary force to Spain in 1936 to combat the international vermin there and earned the enduring gratitude of the Spanish people. And when the war with the Soviet began, the members of the Guard, taken from the prisons to which they had been sent by the Antonescu dictatorship in an effort to suppress their movement, formed the very flower of the Romanian army and were distinguished for their valor and devotion in all the actions of that war.

This is not the place to summarize, however briefly, the career of Codreanu* and the convulsed history of Romania after the precipitate and illegal return to that country of Prince Carol, a royal *debauche* who, after many offenses, had been disinherited and exiled by his own father. Carol, accompanied by a Jewish harlot to whom he was completely subservient, returned to Romania in 1930, dethroned his own son to reign in his stead, and, finding no other way to check the rising political power of the Iron Guard, overthrew the Constitution in 1938 and made himself dictator of Romania. Codreanu, arrested on patently false charges, was, together with thirteen of his lieutenants, taken from prison on the night of 29 November 1938 and, in the early hours of the next morning, murdered in the forest of Tancabesti at the orders of the royal degenerate.† Carol, with the support of the lords of

*For non-partisan and critical accounts of Codreanu's career, see Paul Guiraud, *Codreanu et la Garde de Fer* (Paris, 1940), and the distinctly unsympathetic work by the brothers Tharaud, *L'Envoye de l'Archange*, cited above. Brief appreciations by his followers will be found in Vasile Iasinschi's *Facing the Truth* (Madrid, 1966), and in two volumes of essays by various hands, *Corneliu Z. Codreanu in perspectiva a douazeci de ani* (Madrid, 1959) and *Corneliu Codreanu, prezent* (Madrid, 1966). On the significance of Codreanu and his movement in the history of Europe during the climacteric years that ended in what may have been the Suicide of the West, see the work of the distinguished diplomat and scholar, Prince Sturdza, cited below.

†The method of the murders was singular and remarkable. The fourteen men were taken in buses to the forest and there each of the men, who had been bound in an odd way, was strangled with a rope thrown over his head by a gendarme stationed behind him for that purpose. Then, to give some color to the official story that Codreanu and his ranking Legionaries had been "killed while trying to escape," each corpse was shot in the back several times before it was thrown into the waiting grave. Prince Sturdza, in the Romanian text of his memoirs (Madrid, 1966; pp. 133 f.), asks the inevitable question: "Let us ask ourselves why there was that resort to strangulation, a procedure that was awkward and complicated in the circumstances, instead of a bullet in the back of the head, the simple and usual method and the obvious one to have used, since an hour later, to simulate an escape, the lifeless bodies were riddled with bullets." (There is the further consideration that the bullet, unlike strangulation, would not have left the marks that were detected by autopsy

international finance, ruled Romania by a combination of fraud and violence until September 1940, when the Iron Guard drove him and his Oriental leman from the country, and restored his son to the throne.

The gruesome murders in the dark forest of Tancabesti that night in November 1938 were one of the fateful and decisive events of modern history. King Carol, who gave the orders, himself acted on the orders of his masters, the hidden and malevolent powers that, through their puppets in the governments of Great Britain, France, and the United States, were relentlessly herding the peoples of the West toward the catastrophic and fatal war that Germany was trying so desperately to avert. Carol's owners were, of course, the powers that had installed the Bolsheviks in Russia twenty-one years earlier, and the destruction of the Iron Guard, the only organized and formidable anti-Bolshevik force in Romania, left Carol free to carry out (as he did less than two years later) the plan to surrender Romania's fortified border in Bessarabia to the Soviet and thus open to the Communist hordes the passes into the Balkans and southeastern Europe.

King Carol's commitment to subject Romania to the Soviet as soon as the projected war began was, of course, known to the French government and doubtless in other circles even before he gave the orders for the murders of Tancabesti, which thus changed the strategic balance of Europe and were a preliminary to the dire and appalling disaster that was in fact, as

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when, after the flight of Carol, the bodies were exhumed and the officers who had carried out the murders under orders testified to what they had done.) Prince Sturdza then points out that the elaborate and peculiar way in which the victims were strangled corresponds in every detail to the method by which Jews are instructed to kill their enemies in a passage of the Talmud that he quotes (p. 134). Needless to say, this part of Prince Sturdza's book, like many others, was omitted in the heavily censored English translation cited in our footnote below.

Prince Sturdza has so aptly termed it, the *Suicide of Europe.** It may even have been the decisive turning-point.

No diplomat and statesman of the Western world was more farsighted and sagacious than Prince Michel Sturdza, whose long career as an ambassador in many capitals of the Western world and corresponding contacts in the highest circles of many governments gave him excellent sources of information, while his personal position during the European disaster enabled him to observe and judge with a dispassionate lucidity

*Prince Michel Sturdza wrote his brilliant analysis of the origin of the Second World War in French: *La Bete sans nom — enquete sur les responsabilites* (Copenhagen, 1944). Unfortunately he chose to publish his memoirs, which include a comprehensive study of the European catastrophe and are an absolutely indispensable source for all serious historians, in Romanian: *Romania si sfarsitul Europei — amintiri din tara pierduta* (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro, 1966). It is a misfortune that the observations of one of the wisest and most experienced diplomats of Europe — perhaps the only one who witnessed events from a peculiarly advantageous position, recorded them with philosophical detachment, and then was free to publish his book without being constrained by a need to apologize for himself or for a political party or government at the expense of historical truth — were written in a language that so few of our people can read. To make the work generally available, a wealthy American hired the John Birch Society to perform the technical work of supervising translation and printing and to distribute the book when it was published: *The Suicide of Europe* (Boston, 1968). The choice was unfortunate. The greater part of Prince Sturdza's book was accurately and even ably translated, although the material was drastically rearranged and often curtailed: for example, the concluding paragraphs of Prince Sturdza's text (p. 323 of the original) were reduced to a few lines and buried in a footnote at the bottom of page 23 of the English version. But the text was diligently censored to eliminate every statement, direct or indirect, that could offend the Birch Society's Jewish masters. A great many passages of historical importance were "lost" as the contents of the book were shuffled around, and in what was left, for example, the word *evrei* ("Jews") is almost invariably translated as "some people" or "certain individuals," wherever it could not conveniently be ignored. And, naturally, a long passage was interpolated to commend and advertise the Birch business. But even in this mutilated form, *The Suicide of Europe* is a very valuable book and must be recommended to everyone (except the few who can read the original) who wishes to understand the age in which we live.

that could scarcely have been attained by even the intelligence services of the great nations that were destroying one another in the interests of their common enemy. Honest historians must therefore accord great weight to Prince Sturdza's conclusion that:

> It was Codreanu's murder that prompted Hitler to a radical tactical change in his foreign policy — a change loaded with the most fateful consequences not only for Germany but for the entire world of Western Civilization ... Hitler made two speedy decisions: The first was of military character, the occupation of Czecho-Slovakia ... The second was a bold political decision ... he would negotiate an understanding and an economic arrangement with Soviet Russia.†

By this estimate, Corneliu Codreanu, although he could not have known or even imagined it, carried with him the destiny of generations then living and yet unborn, and the crowned hireling whose hand struck him down was, although his clotted mind could not have guessed it, one of the most pernicious traitors of all time. By any estimate, Codreanu was a great man.

The most eloquent attestation of the nobility of Codreanu's character and the purity of his religious faith is the deep ven-

†*The Suicide of Europe*, pp. 120-23; in the original, pp. 137 f. These two sudden shifts of policy made it seem to the rest of the world that Germany had acted in bad faith at Munich and that even its opposition to the Soviet was insincere; that certainly facilitated the work of the international lords who finally forced on the West the suicidal war which, as the British historian, H. R. Trevor-Roper candidly admits, "Hitler would have done anything to avoid." By far the most complete and accurate study of the complicated diplomatic manoeuvres and intrigues that were needed to start that war is the carefully documented treatise by Professor David L. Hoggan, which, since it has been mysteriously "delayed" by the American publisher who had it set in type many years ago, is thus far available only in the German translation: *Der erzwungene Krieg* (Tubingen, 1963). Much less complete, but valuable, are the late Professor Charles Callan Tansill's *Back Door to War* (Chicago, 1952) and Professor A. J. P. Taylor's *The Origins of the Second World War* (New York, 1962). The facts are indisputable, but many Americans believe that the devastation of Europe and the slaughter of millions of Europeans was admirable because it pleased Jews.

eration for him and loyalty to his memory felt by his surviving followers. Thirty years after his death, twenty years and more after failure and the loss of their country, they are exiles in foreign lands and menaced even there by the ubiquitous power of the anti-humans and the ever accelerated conquest of the Western world by its furtive enemies. But for their Captain and his vision they still feel the devotion that twenty-nine Romanian writers express in their contributions to the recent volume, *Corneliu Codreanu, prezent.*

The students of Romania, patriots and Christians, were selected by the anti-humans as victims of the process described in this book, not so much because they were the objects of the beasts' most venomous hatred, as because they provided material for an experiment that would confirm the universal validity of a technique that the world conquerors had elaborated long before and thus far used with uniform success. The anti-humans rightly judged that if the courageous and devoted youth of the Iron Guard, exalted by the most ardent Christian faith, could not resist the application of a fiendish science, no humans could ever resist.

That is what makes this narrative so tragic.

The Legion took its motto from Seneca: "He who is willing to die need never be a slave." Aye. But what of those who are not *permitted* to die?

WARREN B. HEATH

New York City, 1968.

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE

> "One commits crimes of passion and crimes of logic. The line that separates them is not clear. But the Penal Code distinguishes between them on the concept of premeditation. We are now living in the era of premeditation and perfect crime. Our criminals are no longer those helpless children who plead love as their excuse; on the contrary, they are adults and their alibi is an irrefutable one: 'Philosophy,' which can be used for anything, even for transforming murderers into judges."

These words were written by Albert Camus in the preface of his novel, *The Rebel.* He, for all his masterly discontent, did not know that in a country not too distant from his own France, one engendered and nurtured in the spirit of French thought, in fact, Romania, the paroxysm of a whole series of crimes was reached in secrecy after August 23, 1944 — crimes of a nature so different and unnatural that neither Camus nor any other Westerner could have believed them possible, or even have imagined them.

An operation to invert and reverse human nature is something that defies the imagination of any normal human being. Except for the victims and their torturers, only a few, a very few, persons, who have had the opportunity of informing themselves, can give credence to those crimes, and furthermore can understand the deeper significance lying beneath the physical facts.

It is true that the last four decades constitute an era of crime, crime coldly and logically calculated, even justified

as rational. Such crime now dominates the whole world. It enters into everyday preoccupations. It has become something normal, often commonplace. It has come to be accepted as natural, so that people no longer take cognizance of it or comprehend the real threat to the very existence of humanity.

No one can have the patience to compile a list of all the crimes consummated in these four decades, nor could he do it in a lifetime. They would have to encompass the civil war in post-Czarist Russia with its forced collectivization, the crimes of which have since become well known and recognized as such by the world's leaders. They would have to include the Greek civil war in which the Communists ravaged whole regions; also the so-called "People's Tribunals" that came into being after the war; the bombing of defenseless cities and hospitals; the present camps of slavery and death in all countries under Communist control; Budapest in 1956. But all these are but a few chapters selected from the long story of unleashed evil. They prove either that man has come to feel the necessity to kill as intensely as he has felt the desire to live, or that through a logical perversion of a desire to accomplish an ideal he can easily and with scarcely a twinge of conscience be made to murder the very persons to whom he once intended to give happiness — destroy them in the conviction that this is what he must do, that there is no other way.

All such crimes have one characteristic in common: they are perpetrated in the name of humanity, the class struggle, the liberation of the people, the right of the strongest, all at the discretion of the individual. They all have the same goal: the biological destruction of the enemy, a principle applied by Stalin with fanaticism. The dead cannot defend themselves, nor can they accuse.

Such crimes have long been notorious and endlessly repeated. They have become commonplace and trite. But there is a deeper horror — one of which the world as yet knows nothing. What happened in the prisons of Romania after the nation was subjugated by the Soviets enlarged the domain of crime beyond what people believed possible. Crime has been expanded beyond the biological limits and placed on other coordinates and in a dimension heretofore unknown. Perpetrated in cold blood and cynically, with sadism never met before, crime now aims not to destroy the body, but the soul.

The biological destruction of an adversary no longer satisfies, or pleases; or maybe it does not pay any more. The wrecking of the victim's mind and soul is more appealing and more useful: the destruction of human characteristics; the reduction of man to a level of total animality; a definitive dehumanization that transforms what was human into a docile, malleable protoplasm, instinctively responsive to all the trainer's whims — a zombie.

What is about to be told is, I believe, a unique experience. But it did not spring from fancy, from a brain that had passed beyond the threshold of rationality. In order for it to be possible, a distinct evolution was necessary on a plane of thought, on a philosophic plane, through a long period of upheavals, of breaking down and replacing all values in which man has so far believed. It was necessary that "speculations of pure reason and physical determinism converge with human sciences from which man is virtually eliminated." (G. Thibau, *Babel ou le vertige technique*)

What up till now was considered an unassailable truth — that man is a divine creation — has been replaced by a desiderate taken as truth that man is a creative divinity. The old values and the concept of man have been discarded.

In the light of new realities and relationships, the experimenters crystallized the entire materialistic harvest of the last centuries into a venom worthy of the concept which spawned it. It was necessary that God be dethroned, and that in His stead man be exalted; not an actual man but a hypothetical one, one existing only in the imagination of his creators. The divinization of matter resulted in the confusion of man and matter, with man's submission to matter. This last conclusion permitted the experiment to be made without inhibitions.

When no difference is recognized between a piece of iron subjected to shaping and a man subjected to psychological experimentation, the same working methods may be applied both to iron and to man and the same desired result will be obtained. By virtue of such reasoning, stripped of all human sentiment, it was possible to have toward man the same attitude the sculptor has toward a piece of marble. He carves away to produce from amorphous rock a model existing in his imagination. It does not matter if he is not successful — there is plenty of marble; and if the treatment applied to man is also unsuccessful, again it does not matter — of men there are more than enough.

One single thing may seem paradoxical — that men have dared treat others of their own kind as though they were unlike themselves. Those of whom I shall tell arbitrarily considered themselves different from their fellow men and felt justified in subjecting them to unprecedented treatment. They assumed for themselves the role of creator but denied this to others, as if the latter were kneaded from a different and inferior matter. This was possible because the normal sense of values had become so distorted that even the experimenters themselves were not sure but that a deed conforming to the "principle" today would not be

declared tomorrow a crime and they be punished accordingly. But until then, for them the crime was legal. What is worse, they even proclaimed it a salutary act. They gave the torturer an educator's certificate, and his victim, by virtue of the same contorted logic, they accused of being an odious criminal.

What were the methods used and what were the results of this experimentation in which the fashioning of a new kind of man was attempted, a man of whom even the most primitive savages would be ashamed?

Only the simple facts can tell us. They, above all other considerations, remain irrefutable proof of an era in which disdain for the human condition has reached its lowest level, greatly exceeding anything thus far found in concentration camps.

This is a characteristic of the Twentieth Century, and the contribution of Soviet Russia to the history of mankind, to the history of the nations she has been subjugating, that of having given, through Communist methods, the name to this century: the "Century of Crime."

CHAPTER II

SIGNS

It was in 1951 that I had the first indications that something of a very disturbing nature was taking place. This was exactly the time at which the experiment reached its paroxysm — in utmost secrecy. It was completely unknown to those who remained outside the immediate circle of involvement.

I had been condemned, and was serving my sentence in the Aiud penitentiary when one morning I was taken by two officers and transported to the Securitate* in Cluj without being given any reason. My anxiety was only natural in a penitentiary regime in which one could never know for certain whether or not his fate had been decided. I was particularly disquieted now by the fact that I had engaged in no anti-Communist activity in Cluj: I had never been there.

My first night in Cluj I spent in a vain attempt to adjust to a cell six and a half feet long and two feet wide. The second night I was taken out into the searchroom and there I found myself in the company of three other prisoners, who had been brought from the prison of Gherla. I knew them. Two were students from Bucharest; the third was a worker. Although we had been tried separately, the two students had been engaged in activities connected with mine. We were placed in an automobile and taken to the depot. At eleven that night we left for

*The Bolshevik Secret Police in Romania took over the name of the Security Service of Free Romania. (*Translator's Note*)

Bucharest on a fast express train, guarded by two Securitate officers and a guard-sergeant. Bound in pairs by handcuffs, we were kept in a compartment that was unlighted to prevent our being recognized by other travelers.

It was night. Now and then the moon shone through the car window lighting the faces of the three. They were strange faces. I had passed through many prisons in Romania; I had met thousands of prisoners, but never had my eyes rested on such faces. Beneath the pallor common to all prisoners their faces reflected an exceptional physical weakness. And over the emaciated faces a shadow of terror — a fixed expression of terror which stemmed from some uncommon experience — gave all three a frightening appearance. When, late in the night, the student who was handcuffed to me fell asleep from exhaustion and rested his head on my shoulder, I could no longer suppress a reaction to the fear that overcame me; I moved my shoulder to wake him up. His head, illuminated by the light of the moon, appeared to be that of the corpse of one who had died surprised by a horror so hideous that it had accompanied him into the world beyond. In former times he had been a swimming champion and a man of courage.

Speech among ourselves was strictly forbidden. Every now and then our eyes met, and there I could read the same terror that was impressed on their faces — a terror akin to madness. As we passed through Predeal, the worker, who sat opposite me, asked me unexpectedly, "Your mother is a small dark-complexioned woman, is she not?" His accurate description of my mother surprised me; he had never seen her — for the simple reason that she had never been in Romania.* I did not answer him.

*Bacu's parents lived in Macedonia, where he was born and received his secondary education, going to Romania when he entered the University of Bucharest. (*Tr.*)

Later he spoke to me again, but this time about another matter. "Have we passed Pirinei?" "We are approaching Sinaia," I answered, convinced though that he was not hearing me and that he was present only in body.

The two students hardly spoke. In the morning we arrived in Bucharest. We were taken into the depot's police office which was an indication that we were to continue our trip. Our escorts left us for a few moments. It was then that one of the two, the one shackled to me, began to extol Communism! It seemed that what he had to say was directed to the other two, not so much to convince as to demonstrate that he could correctly repeat a learned lesson. And he seemed in a hurry to prevent the other two from being first. He uttered the hackneyed meaningless words repeated by the Communists on all street corners, but coming from his mouth they took on for me a profound significance. I was amazed to hear him speak thus because I knew him well and knew how he had felt about Communism. And it was generally true of all prisoners that life in prison tended to strengthen the convictions we had held previously. And then he uttered a flagrant lie — claiming that there was decency in the officers of the Securitate.

Again at night we resumed our travel toward Constanta — I recognized the railway line. When the sergeant, a farmer from the Apuseni Mountains, asked with some hesitancy, "Do you believe in God?" the same student hastened to answer that neither he nor any of his acquaintances had *ever* believed in God. This statement came from one who, I knew well, was educated in the Christian faith. This time again I read terror in his eyes. Again he answered with the same haste — as though to prevent a statement from someone else that might be disastrous, and

his eyes seemed to express the same desire for approval by the other two prisoners. But they only looked into emptiness. The sergeant lowered his head. He certainly had expected a different answer.

"Why were you arrested?" the other student was asked later by one of the Securitate officers. "I was a member of a terroristic organization at the Faculty* of Letters in Bucharest. I was so fanatical that during the interrogation I denounced no one — not even the greatest criminals in the group." And then, as if feeling embarrassed (or "unmasked" as I was later to learn) he endeavored to correct his statement — "not even the most responsible of the group, those who led the secret organization." My bewilderment was shared this time also by the two officers who, as myself, heard perhaps for the first time from the mouth of a political prisoner such a characterization of his own activity. No one could possibly answer my own unspoken questions. The other two were still staring into nothingness. How could I suspect at that time everything they had gone through, conditioning them to make statements of which, a few minutes earlier, I would not have believed them capable?

Then we arrived. In the search room, taking advantage of a moment when the guards were not present, I asked the oldest, "What position are you going to adopt during the investigation?" "We must confess the whole truth. What's the use of suffering torture now that everything is lost? The Communists have won the game and are on the right track." I did not listen any further. His answer was a non-sequitur; I was trying to develop a posture which

*European universities are composed of *faculties*, which correspond roughly to the colleges of American universities. The Faculty of Letters dealt with the classical and modern languages and literatures and the other studies commonly called the Humanities. (*Tr.*)

would avoid implicating our friends in activities which had been a subject of previous interrogations, and which we could anticipate would be again taken up in the forthcoming questioning. But he was broken.

There followed the isolation, hunger and terror of the unending inquisition. Alone in my cell, completely cut off from mankind except for my stone-faced investigators, I began to forget the three. Every now and then the officers reminded me of them by reading statements concerning matters of which only they and I had known. But my own suffering did not allow me to dwell too long on this; it remained an ominous enigma that troubled me from time to time.

Later on, in the summer of 1952 I again came into contact with individuals who reminded me of the puzzle I had partly forgotten. Other prisoners, transferred from the forced labor camps on the Danube-Black Sea Canal, brought news that increased my suspicions regarding an entire category of prisoners who had once been most dedicated and most faithful defenders of the nation's freedom — the student body. Accusations were brought against them which to the unknowing observer seemed utterly revolting. And yet the men who told me could not be lying. For they were speaking from experience, of what they had themselves suffered. The "re-educated students," they said, beat them, denounced them, were spies for the secret police, increased the work norms, and tortured any who could not meet them. All these were accusations of an enormous gravity. I wanted to believe that because the majority of these men were simple and untutored they erred, making generalizations on the basis of their own personal experience, for I had known the students in a totally different light.

But further news, instead of refuting what I hoped was not true, actually confirmed aspects which entered the domain of the tragic. This time it was a student who spoke to me. I had known him in years past at the Polytechnical School in Bucharest. At first he would not speak; he was afraid of everyone. But when I told him I came to Constanta from Aiud where, up to a few months previously, nothing out of the ordinary had happened, he loosened his tongue. It was from him that I found out for the first time about the "unmaskings". All the students who were at Pitesti passed through these "unmaskings". He told me it was impossible for him to explain, but that something terrifying took place there. They were tortured in such a manner that all — absolutely all — students became informers, so that they were robbed of their manly nature and became simple robots in the hands of political officers. They were de-personalized.

"Who did the torturing?"

"The 're-educated' ones."

"Who were these 're-educated' ones?"

"Other students who preceded us in 're-education', in 'unmasking' as it is also called."

"Who began that and where?"

"I know neither for sure, but I believe it to be a general phenomenon in all prisons. And wherever it has not yet occurred, it will, sooner or later. It is said that the initiators were three students from Iasi: Turcanu, Titus Leonida, and Prisacaru."

He stayed a little longer in our cell, but he avoided talking any more. "If they ever hear I have been talking, I am a man sentenced to death," he whispered as he was taken out of the cell.

A month later other acquaintances completely verified what had happened in the canal labor compound. "Beware of the students as you would of Satan in person, even if they come under a mask of friendship. They are perfidious. They have done a lot of evil and some continue in their wrongdoing."

"Why is it that everybody talks thus about students? What happened to them that they became so depraved? For you know well that they were not like this before."

"I do not know and I do not want to know what happened to them. I am telling you only that they bite badly — on the sly. Beware!" We did not know at that time — and perhaps he is still ignorant of the fact today — that in the process of degradation, their souls were killed. They had passed through hell.

I learned more from another youth who had passed through the Pitesti prison. He talked to me about the "unmaskings" in a more precise manner. He mentioned students whom I had known and what they had become after they passed through there — dispirited, broken, transformed individuals. But he could not explain through what kind of inner crisis he himself had gone in order to reach that stage. The ordeal through which he passed was, as he told it, a sequence of tortures truly unique as to length and depth. But what he told me was still inadequate to permit me to fathom the depth of the transformation of soul that had to take place to produce such results. His fragmentary story brought to my mind another case of several years past which struck me as unique.

In February of 1951, on our way to Aiud, the group of prisoners, of which I was a member, were lodged in transit at Pitesti, where we awaited the prison van in which we were to be transported on the last leg of the trip. I was

surprised by the thoroughness of the search to which we were subjected there — much more strict than the one at Jilava. And Jilava was considered the toughest prison in the whole of Romania. Then followed a rigid isolation. I could not see even a single face of another prisoner in the Pitesti prison. Occasionally at night, but more often during the day, indistinct groans reached my ears from beyond the wall separating us from the prison proper. I attributed them to the usual tortures found in all prisons. On leaving, a young man from this prison was added to our group. He was an engineer named Eugen Bolfosu. For the next two days, the time it took us to reach Aiud, he spoke but rarely and then only in monosyllabic answers to my questions. But on his face was imprinted the same terror I later read on the faces of my travelling companions from Cluj. Having arrived at Aiud, during the search the engineer was asked from whence he came. When he uttered the word "Pitesti", he was immediately isolated for several days. Later he was taken out, and I met him in the prison shop. He would not tell me the reason for his isolation. The Aiud political officers knew what was happening in Pitesti, and the engineer dared not talk lest he suffer the consequences. Or perhaps he was at that time a simple robot who acted only at the command of the *"politruks."**

I asked the young man who had passed through Pitesti if he had met engineer Bolfosu previously. He told me they had gone through the "unmaskings" together and that he also had been sent to Aiud a little later, but that before leaving Pitesti they were specifically warned by the prison director not to talk. An indiscretion could cost them a return to Pitesti — if unmaskings were not to be started at Aiud as well — and thus a new passing through the

*Low level political bosses in a Communist regime. (*Tr.*)

awful ordeal. Who could disregard that threat without his flesh trembling?

* * * * *

My detention in the cellars of the Securitate of Constanta ended in May 1953. Following twenty months of inquisition I was sent to the Gherla prison to continue serving my sentence. I arrived there on the morning of May 6. I was immediately isolated, but in an hour or two another prisoner was introduced into the cell. He arrived from Bucharest, where he had been taken for a supplementary investigation, from Gherla, a month earlier. We knew each other. He asked me:

"Have you been here before?"

"No, this is my first time."

"Beware of the students as you would of Satan. If you do not, you shall experience very unpleasant surprises. And moreover, you will suffer much needlessly."

"Why, sir, is this the case? What have the students done, or rather, what has been done to them that they have reached such a state? You are not the first person to warn me."

"Personally I cannot explain it to you. Something has happened to them which for me is inexplicable. And I certainly know them, for it has not been long since I was a student myself. I simply cannot understand the nature of the profound transformations which were forcibly induced. I do know they were tortured; yet torture alone cannot account for their behavior. All of us have passed through the hands of the Securitate and, after some more or less serious lapses, we recovered. But the students persist on an infernal path. It is said they went through

'unmaskings'. What the 'unmasking' consisted of, only time and perhaps the recovery of some students could explain to us. But I am wary, and that is why I advise prudence."

After fifteen days of quarantine, I was taken to the prison's shop for work. They put me on the night shift from six in the evening till six in the morning. The first prisoner I met there, or rather, to whom I was introduced by a supervisor, was a former student of philosophy. After he asked me the reasons for my condemnation and my place of origin — inevitable inquiries addressed to all newcomers in any prison — he told me with an impassive voice, while he avoided looking at me, "Beware of me! I am a student. And this ought to tell you much. Beware not only of me but of all students, especially of those who are your friends. They can hurt you much more because you cannot perceive behind the mask each of us wears the vast abyss that now separates us from what we were not too long ago or what we wanted to be."

Here, then, was one of them, one of those "unmasked", who put me on guard *against himself* as well as against others like him or possibly worse. But for him to have done this, there must have yet existed in his soul a vestige of dignity and courage. Did he succeed in his comeback? Did he escape the catastrophe without a definitive mutilation? This was a puzzle which I was only later to unravel.

"Why do you warn me? I have nothing to hide. I serve a sentence for the attitude I adopted against the regime. What importance may details have? And why do you sound a warning even against yourself?"

"Because, if the 'unmaskings' are going to be repeated, I will not be able to keep quiet upon questioning, and I am afraid that you would talk before I do. An unconfessed

detail can cost one his life. For by now we have been brought to the point of fearing for our lives. We have become more cowardly than you can imagine."

I was afraid to pursue the discussion any further. Who could tell me that this was not a subtle trap set for me into which I might let myself fall, the more easily deceived by his frankness? I let the passing of time bring the facts to light. But with this student I made friends rather quickly. Shortly afterwards the ice thawed completely, opening up an exchange of communications without reservation. It was from him that I obtained the first elements of an explanation. For he was, in spite of his youth, a thinker possessing a rare power of analysis.

What happened there at Pitesti could not be described in simple terms. In this, as in many other instances, language is inadequate to express all we want to say. For this reason we often have the impression that something is missing from the whole story. This void can be filled only by the voice of our own soul as we try to live in our imagination what others have lived through in reality.

It is a profound drama touching the most delicate fibers of the human spirit, having origins that transcend the material manifestations of the everyday conflict. Little by little this drama became my overwhelming preoccupation. During the three years I remained in prison and for two more after my release, until 1959, my preoccupation was to penetrate as deeply as possible into the secrets of this phenomenon in order to comprehend it. Investigating discreetly, gathering even the tiniest admissions and hints, listening to the revelations of those who had been victims, only to become torturers themselves later on, I came to comprehend the tragedy that had been consummated within the prison walls of Romania, and to understand how a

psychological experiment, as novel as it was criminal and degrading, could, over a period of time transform humanity into inhumanity. Several scores of students with whom I discussed what happened to them and whose confessions of their own experiences and personal ruin I heard, provided me with the basic information. The present work is a composite picture of their tragedy. It has been written to call attention to the "Pitesti Phenomenon," but is by no means an effort to exhaust the subject.

As incomplete as it is — for the magnitude of the subject exceeds the powers of any single individual — I bring this book as a witness to my brothers in exile so they may more clearly visualize the hell unleashed over their fatherland and over all the countries engulfed by the Soviet Empire. What happened in Romania could have happened — probably did happen — in every other captive country, the authors and perpetrators of the terrors being one and the same people in all lands.

This is a testimony from behind the curtain, from beyond the tomb. I leave to the victims the right to judge.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING

The inauguration of the Communist regime in Romania was the result of historical circumstances in which the Romanian people undoubtedly played the least important role. Whether it was short-sightedness or self-interest that caused Communism's advent in Romania, has now become a question for history to answer; to search today for the determinants of this tragedy is perhaps useless, or in any event merely academic. One fact, however, is certain. The Romanians not only did not want such a regime, they did not even dream that something like it was possible, because — perhaps as in no other European country — no Communist Party had existed in pre-war Romania, not even a Communist problem. The clandestine Communist organization, according to both its boss and the files of the police, had a total of 820 members — and almost half of those were agents of the state police! I met many of them in prisons, sentenced after 1945 for "crimes against humanity"!

The surprise which benumbed the nation at first, later gave way to anxiety. The public in its entirety reacted from the start against Communist violence, which was initially supported by the short-sightedness of political parties and adventurers, but later on only by the Soviet battalions and secret police.

The downfall of the monarchy on Dec. 30, 1947 marked the starting point; it was the signal for a Communist offensive on all fronts to destroy the foundations of the

nation and replace them with Soviet tyranny. This new state of affairs compelled the Romanian citizen to choose between two alternatives; one being collaboration with the Communists, offering honors, a life free from want, and high position; the other carrying the risk of joblessness, incarceration in the cellars of the Securitate, or even loss of life itself.

Instinctively or deliberately, the great majority chose the second, even though they could not influence the course of events in their favor. The fight was so tragically unequal. On the one side we have the live organism of Communism, perfectly disciplined, with strategy perfected over three decades of subjugating the Russian people. This force was small in number, to be sure, but the stakes were high, and knowing the risks, it was not disposed to make any concessions that might weaken its position as victor or "jeopardize its legal status." It was in fact a foreign body determined to embed its fangs in the arteries of the Romanian nation.

On the other side of the conflict we have an organically unblended community, discouraged by the loss of a war, with the feeling of an unjust defeat yet in its heart, and aware that it had been left to make the best of things by its own means — the attitude of the Westerners being more than manifestly one of disinterest in what happened in Romania. In view of this unfavorable attitude of the Western powers, and because of a lack of leadership to channel its efforts toward a possible and advantageous solution, a mass reaction was impossible. To this, one could also add not too small a dose of naivete, especially among politicians, who many times believed the opposite of the obvious. They believed, for example, that the Communist occupation and the imposed regime were but transi-

tory stages and that sooner or later everything was going to revert to normal, without the slightest effort on their part. While the people's zeal was being wasted in fruitless effort, the Communist Party was winning victory after victory, and the politicians were making deals behind-the-scenes or forming tentative governments in anticipation of the arrival of — the Americans!

In the face of the new events, one observed a change in the make-up of the populace. To the ranks of several hundred Communist conspirators and their international brethren was gradually added a stratum of individuals of uncertain background, in large part roustabouts and creatures from the more degraded and contemptible sectors of humanity. To these were added in quite large numbers members of the minority groups who were now installed in government jobs, most of the time without having the slightest competence. Contrary to the professed principles of "class struggle," the Communists that were brought in from the Soviet Union (Ana Pauker, Bodnarenco, Chisinevski, Tescovici, Moscovici, et al.,) encouraged ethnical dissension and the centrifugal tendencies of national minorities, thus arousing and exploiting strongly anti-Romanian sentiments by favoring non-Romanians for admission into Party membership and appointment to low-echelon administrative positions.

On the "counter-revolutionary" front stood the flower of the Romanian nation, with the front ranks occupied by students and young intellectuals, mostly of peasant or middle-class origin. The young people had been anti-Communist for years prior to the direct confrontation with the invaders — for the Russians have always been looked upon as such — possibly because of the national instinct, or their education, or a natural pride. The reasons for

this anti-Communist posture are as various as are the forms taken throughout the whole anti-Communist struggle.

Confronted by this situation, the Communists adopted measures which they deemed appropriate. Completely disregarding all principles of social ethics, human decency, and the Peace Treaty of Paris, which supposedly guaranteed freedom of speech, they unleashed a wave of arrests. Every social stratum of Romania contributed its share of victims, but the hardest hit were the students. How many of them passed under the "protection" of the police, one cannot tell. From 1948, then, until the present time, violent repression of discontent has continued, its intensity depending on the perspicacity of the Securitate's informers or on increase or decrease of the people's resignation to their fate. For manner and magnitude, the arrests of the night of May 14/15, 1948 remain memorable. For on that one night, in the three most important university centers (Bucharest, Iasi and Cluj) no fewer than 1,000 students were arrested. This figure represents about 2% of all students at the time.

The methods of torture most commonly used by the Communist Secret Police were freely applied in the interrogation of prisoners. For months, the military tribunals pronounced sentences prepared by the Ministry of the Interior in advance of the "trials", either behind closed doors or in public for the benefit of journalists and Party activists. Sentences ranged from hard labor for life down to five years' imprisonment. Sentences of only two or three years were extremely rare and given only where there was no evidence at all against the accused.

Using a method long practiced in the U.S.S.R., that of segregating prisoners according to their professional back-

ground and intellectual capacity, the Communists in Romania grouped the students in a category apart from the others, and designated as their place for detention the prison at Pitesti. This measure served another purpose, also — that of preventing them from exercising their influence (which was considerable) over the great number of peasants and workers who continually swelled the ranks of political prisoners. The influence of the students in Romanian society after the Second World War was as great as it had been before the war.

One single fact is worthy of note here. Among the large numbers of arrested students, hardly any were of minority origin! The "class struggle" theory here was undeniably violated. According to the theory, of course, the enemies of Communism would have included large numbers of the foreign ethnic groups that enjoyed a favored economic position prior to the takeover and had presumably suffered correspondingly great economic losses with the liquidation of "capitalism."

Also it is worth noting that, just as the wealthy resident aliens had aroused no apprehension in the Communist rulers, so the sons of rich Romanians were conspicuously lacking among the students arrested. The basis for this remarkable discrimination may lie in a conflict between two worlds based on motives entirely other than those taught in Communist classes in Marxism-Leninism and in the "history" of the Party and the working-class.

During the trials, sometimes relatives of the accused were permitted to see him once more, but after sentence was pronounced, the doors were locked behind him, and tight secrecy deprived the family of all news of him, until he was released — if ever he was. Oftentimes prisoners had been dead for years while the family waited and waited

at home for news, hoping that after 10 or 20 years they might be re-united with the loved one who had disappeared. It was to be expected that such rigorous secrecy would prevent leakage outside the prison walls of any report or even rumor of the crimes committed within.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRISONS OF SUCEAVA AND PITESTI

When the wholesale arrests of students began, the Moldavian region was one of the hardest hit. Since the university in Iasi, Moldavia's capital, had for a long time been a major center of all student movements of nationalistic character, an extremely large number of students in the Faculties of Letters, Law, and Medicine of that university were immediately seized and confined. The former Suceava Fort outside the town was used as the place of temporary imprisonment for these students, inasmuch as both the Securitate's investigating offices and the trial chambers were within the fort, so the prisoners could be produced at a moment's notice by the penitentiary officials. Living conditions in the fort (later transformed into a disciplinary prison) were considered among the most severe of all the prisons of Romania, excepting perhaps only Jilava. To the inhuman treatment and indescribable sanitary conditions (the fort is permanently humid and without sunlight for most of the day) was added psychological terror produced by the presence of inquisitors who were notorious for their sadism and their cruelty in torturing prisoners. One of these officers was the Commissar Pompilian, whom the Communists had inherited from the old regime; another was a certain Fischer from somewhere in the vicinity of Iasi, where he had been a small shopkeeper until he was transformed into a police officer overnight.

Ostensibly for administrative reasons, but in reality to prepare for the coming experiment, the Moldavian students

were kept in this fort for quite some time, even after their trials, and were only later transported to Pitesti.

Among them must be mentioned one, Turcanu, a student of law originally from around Radauti, who from the very first played the leading role in the tragedy. Turcanu had been a member of the Communist Party in Iasi; after his record had been verified by the Soviet occupation of Romania, he was assigned to lead a "voluntary" team, part of an "international working brigade", on a railway-construction project in Bulgaria. After completing this probationary work to the satisfaction of his masters, he was sent to a school of Communist diplomacy and destined for a diplomatic post abroad. Then, ostensibly, his brilliant prospects were shattered by a sudden arrest.

The reasons for his trial and subsequent imprisonment at Suceava are obscure. While a high school student, he knew that some of his classmates were members of an anti-Communist organization, with which, it was said, he had sympathized or even associated himself.

Later at college he continued to maintain friendly relations with those former classmates in high school who were now his fellow students in Iasi, and were continuing clandestinely their fight against Communism. Whether Turcanu came to the university as a Communist or joined the apparatus there, his superiors must have known at the time that he was maintaining his acquaintance with the unsuspecting anti-Communists, but that fact was "discovered" while the Communists were preparing him for a diplomatic career and provided the legal pretext for a formal trial at which Turcanu was sentenced to seven years in correctional prison for "conspiracy." The real reason for sending him to prison was a subtle one. He was considered by the Communists to be sufficiently reliable to

become their principal instrument in the initial phases of their experiment.

It is significant that both before the beginning of "political re-education" at Suceava as well as throughout the experiment, Turcanu kept in direct and constant touch with individuals who were not members of the Securitate's inquisitorial staff at the prisons. These individuals, who usually came from the Ministry of the Interior in Bucharest, must have been of superior rank to those stationed in the prisons.

From his first days in the prison, Turcanu began to apply a plan previously formulated by the officers of the Securitate, who were themselves no more than instruments in the hands of their masters.

The initial phase of the plan consisted of a campaign of so-called "re-education" of the students — a process calculated to "integrate" the students into the Communist society; in other words, forced political indoctrination.

From the beginning, Turcanu had as close collaborator the college student Titus Leonida, also from the northern part of Moldavia, as well as another youth, Bogdanovici, who had been still in high school.

The first step was the completion of statistical tables showing the origin of those imprisoned at Suceava, their property, education, political affiliations, and other items of personal information. The purpose of these statistics was to show that the great majority of students were merely victims of the bourgeois reactionary education and that, considering their social status, or "social class" as Communists say, their place was not in the ranks of those opposing "Socialism" but, on the contrary, alongside the Communists. If for reasons of opportunism, some peasants

went along at the beginning of this indoctrination, the great majority of the university students reacted against the "re-education" propaganda with so firm a rejection that no doubt was left in the minds of the "teachers" that such methods were futile. Neither promises of liberation from prison as a reward for "re-education", nor promises that they would be given holdings from the land that had been taken for distribution to the peasants could shake the convictions of the prisoners. They knew the realities of Communist rule too well to degrade themselves by playing in such a farce.

To the lectures based on Communist pamphlets which political officers placed at the disposal of Turcanu and his accomplices, the students responded with ridicule and mockery. The Communist songs in "meetings of political re-education" were turned into improvised parodies so clever and devastating that after a time the political officers forbade Turcanu to allow singing at all.

Practically speaking, the "re-education" period at Suceava ended in failure, and Turcanu's activity was suspended when the prisoners were at last transferred from Suceava. That preliminary phase had been designed simply to test the "fanaticism" of those who were thus selected for the real experiment that was to begin at Pitesti.

Since they came from the same region, many of the students at Suceava had been acquainted even before they entered the university and most of them knew one another, so contacts were easily kept. At Pitesti, however, they were mingled with hundreds of students from all the other universities of Romania.

The various groups thus assembled at Pitesti were of quite diverse social backgrounds and political principles.

The great majority of them were either Legionaries,* or members of the National Peasant Party; a few were members of the Liberal Party, and there were several groups united only by their loyalty to the monarchy. There was also a goodly number of small groups, lacking a clearly stated political position — the so-called "mushroom" organizations — likened to the growth of mushrooms following a rain. The proliferation of such groups was a consequence of the climate created by the Communist Party itself. These groups also differed among themselves in the degree of their dedication to the anti-Communist cause — the criterion, incidentally, by which the "dangerousness" of the accused was judged, and the basis on which the Communist Securitate determined his punishment. Thus it was possible that for one and the same offense the sentence could be five, or twenty-five, years, depending upon the investigating officer's own estimate of the degree of the victim's "fanaticism."

The regimen of detention at Pitesti was very severe. In the world outside the prison nothing was known of what was taking place within the walls. The Communists brazenly called the Pitesti prison "The Center for Student Re-education," a clever title which actually did tell the truth, but ambiguously, the man in the street understanding one thing by "re-education," and those who were implementing it, another. Rumors whose origin could not be traced, but which certainly emanated from the Ministry of the Interior, were designed to create the impression that the lives of students were not endangered; that on the contrary, truly humane conditions were created for them; that in addition to decent food, they had at their

*I.e. The Legion of St. Michael the Archangel, which was undoubtedly the strongest, most resolute, and most devoted anti-Communist and nationalist organization in Romania. (*Tr.*)

disposal lecture halls, movies, courses of professional readjustment, entertainment, and other privileges. Since there were no other sources of information, people somehow began to believe these rumors, particularly the parents of the prisoners who hoped against hope that they might soon see their sons again; but this hope was illusory.

The prison at Pitesti was relatively new as compared to other prisons in Romania. Built by King Carol's regime, it was meant to shelter dangerous common criminals. Transformed into a political prison by Antonescu in 1941, it reverted to its original purpose after 1944. In 1947-48* it was used for the first time by Communists as an internment center for the National-Peasant Congressmen arrested for their anti-Communist attitude in Parliament. A little later it was called the "Center for Student Reeducation," under which name it was operated until 1951.

Situated to the northwest, outside the town limits, close to a small river and far from any dwelling, it was a location almost ideal for torture, since no scream from within its walls could be heard by outsiders.

In this "Center," ideal for experimentation, were brought together all students arrested up to the fall of 1948. They were divided into four categories according to the classifications given when sentenced.

Category I consisted of students "retained" without even a pretense of legality, on the simple basis of their political sympathies; for lack of proof of any offenses they could not be convicted of anything. This did not prevent, however, their imprisonment for as much as six or seven years!

*Until they deposed young King Michael (Mihai) on December 30, 1947, the Soviet maintained a pretense that their occupation of Romania was merely temporary, pending the conclusion of a treaty with Austria, and accordingly the full rigor of Bolshevik rule was not applied to Romania until 1948. (*Tr.*)

Category II consisted of those sentenced to "correctional" prison terms for minor offenses: sheltering persons suspected of anti-Communist sentiments, or failure to denounce them; favoritism, membership in the Communist Party without activity on its behalf, or simply suspicion based on some reported statement! Most of these had no political orientation and were victims of their own refractoriness, of special circumstances, or of the "subversive" organizations fabricated by the Ministry of the Interior to keep its spies and agents busy and to force the Communist cadres to be perpetually vigilant for signs and dissatisfaction or "deviationism." The sentences of those in this category varied from three to five years of "correctional" imprisonment.

Category III consisted of individuals condemned, with some legal justification, for offenses classified as "plotting against the social order." These received sentences of from eight to fifteen years of imprisonment under a severe regimen. The greatest number of students fell into this category, which contained those whose activity was discovered but not in all cases confessed.

Those in category IV were sentenced to from ten to twenty-five years hard labor. They were fewer than in category III. Here one found group leaders, men who had been charged with special assignments, individuals of the student world having an unusual influence over those around them, and members of groups that were thought to be prepared for armed resistance.

In theory, this was the classification according to the gravity of the offense that is practiced in prisons all over the world. But in practice, this classification and segregation served to isolate the categories from one another, isolating the less "contaminated" from the "fanatics." Thus

separated, the "minor" categories, deprived of their former leaders, were less able to resist the pressures to which they were subjected. This was especially true in the second category, which contained a large number of unstable individuals who were somehow predisposed to submit more or less easily or, at worst, to offer less resistance.

Until the beginning of 1949, prisoners in the first three categories were allowed to correspond with their families. Once a month they were permitted to write and receive a few censored lines and a food package of three to five kilograms according to their category. Those in category IV were excluded from both privileges.

The food given prisoners was very poor. While a minimum of 1800 calories was officially specified by the administration, the food actually given to students, as to all other prisoners in Communist Romania, was normally limited to 700-800 calories, although on very rare occasions as much as 1000 was given. Within a few weeks following arrest, the effects of this substandard diet, aggravated by punishments inflicted mercilessly, could be seen very clearly. All, especially the sick, became so physically weak that, when not coerced, they would commonly spend hours on end in almost total immobility to avoid using energy. Thus, for those fortunate enough to receive them, packages of food from the outside were the most precious of gifts.

Medical assistance in the prison was practically nonexistent. It was limited either to dispensing an aspirin, irrespective of the ailment, or to strychnine shots for those whose nerves were shattered, a mere token treatment, and usually the number of injections was limited to from two to four.

During this preliminary period, the prisoners of the first three categories, who could receive monthly packages of

food from their families, devised an ingenious system to help the prisoners of the fourth category, who, sentenced to hard labor, were denied all communication with the outside. The latter were incarcerated on the top floor of the building. Thus the prisoners below, by having a rope lowered from the windows above, could send up small quantities of food, especially to the sick and infirm. This was done, however, at great risk, for those caught were sent to "cazinca" — a special room in the prison's cellar full of dirt, with walls permanently dripping with moisture. The prisoner was stripped down to a minimum of clothing and left without food for a period of time that depended on the whims of the warden or political officer and which usually was in direct proportion to the degree of "fanaticism" of the prisoner. And as the "cazinca" never lacked for prisoners, an increase in the number of tuberculosis cases was soon observed.

It was under these conditions that the Ministry of the Interior, after the preliminaries were judged adequate, decided to begin the real experiment. Food packages and correspondence with the outside were permanently discontinued. The guards' terrorism increased in intensity. Torturings in the prison basement increased in frequency, oftentimes for reasons patently trumped up. Threats, with mysterious meanings implied, frequent visits of the warden and political officers to the cells, unexpected searches at all hours of day and night, and prohibition of every kind of activity under stiff penalty, were signs of fast-approaching changes.

* * * * *

The group from Suceava, accompanied by Turcanu, had recently arrived at Pitesti. Within the small circle of advocates of "re-education" at Suceava, a schism had oc-

curred. Bogdanovici — son of the prefect of Iasi County who had threatened to disclaim him and deprive him of his name if he refused re-education — continued to champion a system of re-education by persuasion, limited to Communist ideological lectures and study of printed brochures supplied by the prison administration. He later confessed, just before he was executed, that his aim was to limit brainwashing to theoretical discussions and thus, by averting brutality, protect the students from compromising themselves; he hoped, he said, to deceive the organizers of the experiment and to tergiversate in anticipation of possible liberation.

On the other hand Turcanu and Titus Leonida professed the necessity of a system of "re-education by force", a system which by its very nature was elastic and unrestricted, and which permitted any means for attaining its objective. It is, of course, understood that no decision concerning the means to be employed could have been made without a formal order from the prison's administration. The proposal to use physical means was much more complicated than the Bogdanovici approach, for its purpose was not simply torture in order to elicit true or even fictitious confessions from individuals; its avowed purpose was to *change the convictions* of one thousand students hostile to the Communist regime. Turcanu and his collaborators would not have dared even to think of doing such a thing without knowing in advance that they had the total support of the Securitate and thus of the Communist Party, and it is not likely that they did more than pretend to advocate as their own a procedure they had been instructed to use.

Just before he began to implement the "re-education by force," Turcanu, we learned, had been visited several times by emissaries from the Ministry of the Interior, with whom

he held private discussions for hours on end.* Also, he himself was absent from Pitesti for days, and no one knew whither he had gone or for what purpose. What was the subject of his discussions and what promises he received could not be learned even by his closest collaborators. Once the tragedy began to unfold, his role appeared clearly and hideously. He was a simple agent carrying out an assigned mission.

The first act was the formation among the prisoners of an ostensibly spontaneous and voluntary organization known as "the Organization of Detainees of Communist Convictions".† It was obvious that this organization was officially approved: its members claimed to be Party members, and their actions were to be for the "benefit of the working class." The organization being thus established, the process of implementing the instructions given by the Securitate was begun.

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*[It may be well to remind the reader at this juncture that the primary function of the Ministry of Interior in Romania has always been exercise of the police power of the state, officially to maintain internal security, and also, under King Carol, to thwart and paralyze the political opposition. The nearest analogue in the United States is the office of the Attorney General (to which the F.B.I. is subject), and one can imagine the power of that department, if it had direct jurisdiction over all the state, county, and municipal police forces in the nation. When the Bolsheviks took over, they found ready for their own use a highly centralized government with a powerful police system, and they needed only to replace the Romanian officials with domestic traitors and imported alien terrorists. — *Editor*]

†Hereafter referred to as O.D.C.C. (*Tr.*)

CHAPTER V

HOSPITAL ROOM FOUR

On the northern edge of the prison building, on the ground floor, there is a room bearing the number 4. Initially it was meant for the sick; that is why it retained the name and was known to the prisoners as "Hospital Room Four". This room, fairly large, was selected for beginning the experiment for it was secluded from the cells in which the students were confined.

Here is the description of what happened there given me by a student who was among the first victims.

"One evening we were taken from a ground-floor cell, where we had spent some time, and walked to Hospital Room Four. We were about ten students, all from 'correction'.* In Room Four we found another group of students already there — about twenty — including Turcanu and Titus Leonida. We suspected nothing untoward, for transfer of prisoners from one room to another was quite frequent and had become almost routine. After six o'clock, the time at which the cells of the prison were normally secured for the night, Turcanu stood up and menacingly posting himself in front of us, began to talk.

" 'We, a group of detained students,' he said, 'decided to rehabilitate ourselves in the eyes of the workers' regime, for we realize that what we did was against the interests of the working people and Party. We consider that you

*I.e., from the second category described in the preceding chapter. (*Tr.*)

are an obstacle to our desired rehabilitation because of your "anti-workers" attitude. That is why we request you to renounce your previous convictions and to join our group. If you will not do this in a normal manner, we will use against you all means at our disposal. We are determined to carry out the action to its end and will crush any resistance.'

"As I was unfamiliar with what had happened in Suceava, at first I thought this was a joke in bad taste. I had never heard such an impertinence, not even from the most fanatical men of the prison administration. I never was one of the 'strong' ones, and to this day I cannot understand why I was selected among the first ones to be worked on. You can imagine the answer I gave together with all those who had been brought with me into Room Four by the chief of our section. A sane man, we thought, could not utter such stupidities. So we took his speech as a joke, and began to jest.

"Turcanu expected such a reaction, for he knew quite well the student mentality and convictions. That is why he was prepared. All those who were with him in the room when we arrived, remained quiet, waiting. All of them had handy, hidden under the nearby bunk blankets, a bludgeon, cudgel, post, belt, or board, supplied naturally by the administration, for it would have been impossible for anyone to procure them otherwise.

"Our reply gave Turcanu the opportunity to start. He furiously raised his cap, and then at once, at that signal, the bludgeons and cudgels were brought out from under the blankets. Every one of them was armed and, without warning, struck the one of us nearest him. As a matter of fact they had so placed themselves by prearrangement that each had a victim handy. Taken by surprise, we were

confused. But we came to our senses immediately and began to defend ourselves — each as best he could. In desperation, we started to attack. We were at an advantage, in fact, for we were defending our own skins while the others struck by command. As they later admitted, they really had not expected that matters would go so far. We began to disarm them. In the room one could hear only the whacks of the bludgeons and the groans of those stricken. In the confusion one could not distinguish the original groups. All were striking to defend themselves, and the fight turned into a life and death struggle, in which each man fought furiously to overcome his antagonist. After a while the situation became less confused. Although they were twenty against our ten, all those who had attacked us were sprawled on the floor, Turcanu included. This was definitely not what the devisers of the experiment had expected, so intervention was needed to prove to us that all opposition was vain.

"During the entire fight the warden, Lieutenant Dumitrescu, had watched through the peephole in the door. When he realized that Turcanu and his minions had been worsted, he brusquely opened the door, and, surrounded by some twenty prison guards, his leading subordinates and officers of the Securitate, he entered the room. All were armed with cudgels, even the warden. Silence ensued. Only a muffled groan could be heard now and then. The director ordered everyone to stay where he was. Then followed a dialogue between the director and Turcanu.

" 'What is happening here, you bandits?' (The term 'bandit' was the epithet with which prisoners were addressed by the prison administrators). Turcanu took a step forward and replied:

" 'Sir, we, a group of students, realizing that we had

sinned against the working class, opposing its well being and that of the people, decided to rehabilitate ourselves in the eyes of the Party. We therefore considered it necessary to respect the wishes of the prison administration, to do all that is asked of us, and to re-educate ourselves in a Marxist spirit, in order to shorten the period of our detention, and to be of use to the working class after our release. But when we began to discuss our intentions, the bandits who are here with us sprang upon us with their concealed bludgeons and tried to kill us. We defended ourselves as best we could. We therefore beg the administration to protect us from these criminals and to ensure our lives and safety.'

"There followed several exchanges of questions and answers in which the warden, simulating astonishment, asked Turcanu for further explanations. Then he turned brusquely to us and said: 'So that's it, bandits'?

"That was all! At his signal the guards all attacked us, while Turcanu's group quickly slipping around behind the warden, left our group fully exposed.

"Who could raise his hand against a uniformed official? We were already bruised and exhausted, and we well knew that such resistance meant immediate shooting.

"There followed a terrible scene, lasting unbelievably for several hours, during which one could hear only the thwacks of the bludgeons, the groans of the sufferers, and the profanity of the warden and his henchmen. Turcanu's group helped the guards every now and then, when some unfortunate managed to separate himself from the group of those beaten, and tried — futilely — to find a hiding place. The guards dealt their blows with all the viciousness they could muster, venting their spite on us for having defied them previously.

"Weakened by our designedly inadequate diet, overwhelmed by the number and force of the guards as well as by the authority they represented, little by little we ceased our futile but still instinctive efforts to avoid the blows. By now the guards struck us as they would so many empty sacks. The floor was full of urine and blood. Prostrate and exhausted by beating, our bodies were strewn on the floor like corpses on a battlefield. Finally, the guards left the room. We thought it was all finished. But this was only the beginning! Turcanu's group took over. We were subjected to an extremely minute bodily search. Everything that might constitute a protection, even in imagination, was taken from us. Only our clothing was left us. We were ordered to crawl under the large common bed. Those who could not move, were dragged by the 're-educators' under whose dominion we would be thenceforth. Many among those who followed Turcanu deplored what was happening. But the spectacle of what took place and the alternative of seeing themselves in our shoes compelled them to continue in the ways of dishonor. They had not believed that things would reach that stage. Once engaged in the dirty game, however, they could not turn back because between them and us there now existed a real abyss. But that was only for a time. *Several months later I myself did to others what had been done to me.*

"The plan had been elaborated down to the last detail. It was applied on an ever increasing scale as new participants were trained. What happened in 'Hospital Room Four' was repeated hundreds of times in other cells, with only slight variations.

"Immediately after the beating, we were subjected to the 'unmasking'."

* * * * *

What the Communist Party perpetrated in the prisons of Romania belongs to the domain of pathological psychology. According to the Communist mentality, it was simply a job like any other, which had to be successfully concluded, regardless. Human nature, moral or social considerations could not hinder the progress of an important experiment.

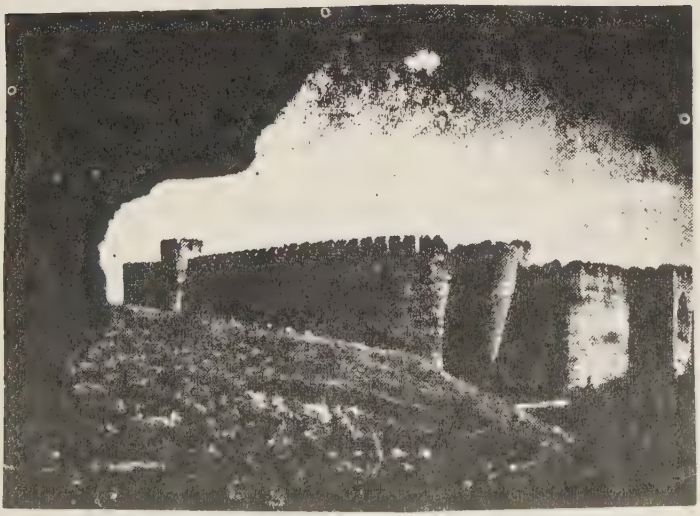
In all this tragedy, Turcanu was but an actor, playing under the direction of those who had designed the experiment and watched it from beyond the footlights with interest and pleasure. And his original collaborators, who hoped to benefit by an earlier release from prison, were only instruments in his hand.

What deters persons of criminal tendencies in normal society is, no doubt, the fear of punishment by the legal justice that maintains social equilibrium. Such were the conditions at Pitesti that Turcanu was assured that he would never be called to account, no matter how many acts of bestiality he might commit, because the very authorities who were supposed to defend prisoners from violence by their fellows, had ordered and implemented the sinister plan that cost the lives of so many students and caused the moral ruin of all the others.

Probably Turcanu himself did not realize at first how far he was expected to go. He could not have devised the operation himself. Its diabolical subtlety and ingenuity lay far beyond his own capabilities. He was only capable of doing what he was told. Those who masterminded and directed the operation wanted more than mere torturing of the victims. They were determined to penetrate into the most intimate recesses of the human soul, probing and prodding it, finding even the smallest cleavages, discovering

everything that can be struck, broken, destroyed in man to leave him only a body made passive and void of volition.

Beasts kill out of biological necessity — to feed. But the beast-man when he uses reason to implement his hatred, knows no limit. Only men capable of both great lucidity and frenzied hate could have decreed Pitesti. That seems paradoxical, but in the Communist world the paradoxical becomes normal. If Turcanu is responsible for physical tortures (for which, as a matter of fact, he later paid), it is others who must answer for the entire process of destruction. The list of names is long. And it begins with those who destroy the values within man, who destroyed his equilibrium without substituting anything in its place. The vacuum gave birth to the disorientation. And this disorientation unleashed the madness.



CHAPTER VI

THE COLLAPSE

The initiators of the experiment already knew very well not only the structure of the Romanian soul but also how the particular youths selected for experimentation had been educated in school, at home, and especially in the organization to which they were ideologically devoted before their arrest.

Their complete breakdown could therefore be accomplished only by systematically destroying everything that constituted the firm anchorage of their lives and thoughts; in other words, by cutting them loose from their moorings. And because Christianity, the diametrical opposite to materialism, has always offered the most effective system for living, and because the majority of students arrested were condemned for activity inspired by the Legion of St. Michael the Archangel, the approach of the "re-educators" was to attack precisely those values on which the Christian ethic is based. By destroying these, they could destroy the very reason the youths chose to go to prison rather than compromise their principles.

Investigations conducted in the Ministry of the Interior and in various regional Securitates, managed to wrest quite a few secrets from the students, not so much because of moral weakness as by means of brutal methods of interrogation. These were such that it was almost impossible for a student to deny an offense even if he had committed none; he admitted the crime to avoid further torture. But even though the Securitate did succeed in tearing secrets

from tortured minds, it was unable to affect the structure of the soul. On the contrary, having passed through these investigations, the students came out more convinced than ever of the righteousness of the cause for which they were suffering, and of the absurdity of the newly imposed system. As long, then, as the soul remained unaltered, there had been no defeat. So it was precisely the soul that remained the principal target, its utter destruction, the aim.

* * * * *

The Romanian people and their faith appeared in history at no determined date, but the Romanian soul is organically commingled with Christianity, perhaps because they were born together, as witness Romania's historical chronicles over several centuries and all the crosses, called *troiţe*, set up at nearly all crossroads in the countryside. Since the Romanian has traditionally put all his hopes in God when trials confronted him, the peasants' sons, now students, turned to God for help in the most trying time of their lives. A prayer murmured from the depths of one's soul by trembling lips was often more satisfying than bread. Though it is often said that faith is inversely proportional to the degree of education, exactly the opposite was found in Romania's prisons. Those whose belief was strongest, who felt the greatest need to pray, were definitely the best educated, irrespective of their political affiliation, including even the most materialistic socialists, who discovered the closeness of God, in prison, where only true faith could fill the void of their lives.

The Communists recognized this fact and decided to strike from the beginning with all fury, aiming to produce despair and despondency until this faith was destroyed. Thus could they render ineffective the twin pillars of Ro-

manian patriotism: Christian moral precepts, and tradition.

Everything of the past which could offer any kind of refuge was to be muddied and denigrated. This included the heroes of history and the folklore of Christian inspiration. Then, to be given special attention, was the destruction of love for family, in order completely to isolate the victim in his own misery, bereft of religion, love of country, and family. This would break the chain that links together a community of national thought and gives meaning to a national struggle. When the individual was thus cut off from his history, faith and family, the ultimate step in "re-educating" him was to destroy his existence as a personality — an individual. This, to the victim, was to prove the most painful step of all and was called his "unmasking."

These, then, were the main objectives of the experiment launched at Pitesti Prison by which the "re-educators" hoped to produce in the end "the new man," de-personalized, a robot which they could manipulate.

The preparations necessary for initiating the last cruel step, the "unmasking," were probably patterned after methods explained in a book by a Russian lawyer who, arrested and tortured after confessing everything, wrote it for the benefit of his interrogators. It is rumored that this happened during the first investigations carried out by the Communist police after the capture of Russia. In the book, the author used himself as an example, searching his own soul, and succeeded in placing at the disposal of his torturers a psychological treatise of overwhelming importance. Analyzing himself, he discovered the weak points in man, the most vulnerable ones, through which an ultimate breakdown can be achieved.

The weaknesses, or "cracks" as he calls them in his book, are hunger, psychological terror, endless uncertainty, and total isolation. Months of undernourishment, therefore, which our student prisoners had already endured, laid the groundwork quite well for what was to follow.

There you have the prerequisites for applying the "unmasking" technique. Practically speaking, it consisted of two distinct phases, the outer and the inner unmasking. The first was but an intensification of Communist Securitate's usual investigative methods involving not only some torture but much that was grotesque and irrational. But the second, the "inner unmasking," which was to result in the final breakdown, was the one that received the greatest attention from the experts.

The first phase carried to completion the secret police's earlier investigations through a torturing system whereby they sought to squeeze a man into the position of declaring all, but absolutely *all,* that he had done or intended to do prior to his arrest. He had to name and denounce *all* persons he had been in contact with, all who helped him with money or food, advice or moral encouragement; all who had sheltered him; all who knew of his activities even if they did not participate in them; all who did not sympathize with the Communist regime; all whom he suspected of having infiltrated the Party or having joined it opportunistically; anybody who seemed likely later to engage in anti-Party activity; maligners of the Party; etc. Then he had to tell whether he had any ideological material — books, documents, newspapers, circulars, etc. — which he had not declared during earlier questioning; where they were hidden; who else knew of their existence; whether he possessed firearms; if so, where hidden. Particular emphasis was placed on firearms, especially those stored

away by peasants as the German troops retreated in 1944; and on any individuals of the "people's army" who might later, through bribery or corruption, place at the disposal of the "enemies of the people" weapons or anything else that could be used against the Party.

The oral declarations were first demanded from the victims, were then inscribed on soap plaques, verified and attested by a member of the "re-education committee" (or by Turcanu himself, if the case seemed a bit interesting), and were finally put on paper, signed by the declarant, and sent to special officers of the Ministry of the Interior, who proceeded, as soon as possible after screening the information, to arrest the persons "denounced" in the declaration. Also as part of this outer unmasking, the student, if he had been transferred from another prison, had to detail his activities there as well as give a detailed account of his activities after arriving at Pitesti.

During the first months of their imprisonment, before Turcanu began his work, students had been allowed a modicum of freedom, being supervised more or less superficially by the guards, and had organized their free time for their own benefit. Not having books or writing materials, not even pencil and paper (it was dangerous to be found possessing these), students discovered anew the Roman stylus, using soap tablets instead of wax ones. It was on these little tablets that all writing was done. In the absence of books, courses in foreign languages were pursued, also in advanced mathematics, chemistry and other subjects as remembered from student days. Discussions proved to be quite fruitful, especially among those who had studied philosophy, literature, law, and theology, many aspects of Romania's spiritual life as well as problems of sociology and philosophical orientation. All this

was condoned by the Communists, who considered it a matter of adjusting to life inside a prison; but if they detected, under cover of these educational sessions, any sort of political activity, the punishment was more severe than for similar activity outside.

Nevertheless, there was no lack of discussion of a purely political character among students of different convictions. Through these talks they came to know one another better and were able to clear up disagreements of the past. These discussions frequently led to real *rapprochement,* dissipating erroneous impressions formed during earlier confrontations when passions were less well controlled; and a mutual esteem previously unthought of thus developed. It was this kind of information about the students that the "unmaskers" particularly were after.

The individual under interrogation had to confess all the discussions he had had with his fellows, report in detail all educational meetings that had dealt with citizenship and political events, and denounce all who had shown attitudes hostile to the prison administration or made sarcastic remarks in connection with interpretation of Marxism, or jokes about Stalin the "teacher." Answers were required to such questions as who among the students had a "fanatical" attitude; or was better informed; or was capable of polarizing the younger members around him; who gave medical help to those condemned to hard labor — all this in order to determine precisely the classification of individuals for eventual use in "unmasking" those who as yet had not walked through the fire.

When the student had declared all, or as much as he had to in order to convince the re-education committee that he was hiding nothing, only then began the real tragedy, the "inner unmasking," the attempt to annihilate

the soul. Through the first unmasking he had given over enough information and names to the Securitate to destroy collaborators still free; now he would be forced to yield up his own personality for immolation. The re-educators hoped to destroy the moral and psychological strength of his inner being and transform him into amorphous material, to be shaped by them into a "new structurization."

To this end the students were obliged to crush underfoot everything they held most sacred — God, family, friends, love, wife, colleagues, memories, ideology — everything which bound them to the past, anything that might give them inner support while in prison.

When the student had passed this test also, to the satisfaction of the re-educators, he became an "honest and clean" vessel worthy of receiving the new doctrine of Marxist humanism, embodied at that time in the person of "the genial leader of the peoples," Mr. I. V. Stalin.

In the name of this doctrine of re-structuring, and to justify the unmaskings in his own way, Turcanu used to say:

"You bandit, I beat in you the Legionary criminal (or the National Party member, as the case might be); I have nothing against you personally. By my action, I am helping you to discard the criminal concept that brought you here, and am preparing you to join in a new cause, more just, the cause of the working people."

As a matter of fact, this is the kind of treatment which, on different levels and in different terms, is applied to all of society under Communist tutelage. Through devious propaganda manipulation, the Communists try to make man believe that general pauperism is not real, that the

state of affairs could not be better, and that this is the only road to happiness....

For those who have lived under Communism, a paradox such as this is not uncommon, and they are not long surprised at the considerable disproportion between what is claimed and what is actually done. For instance, all kinds of laws are enacted to satisfy every human need, but exactly the opposite is practiced. But about this one cannot speak in a loud voice....

CHAPTER VII

THE CONDITIONED REFLEXES

The Communists apply to human beings the well-known principle of conditioned reflexes that explains much of the behavior of animals.

These reflexes, which are the basis of Socialist medical science and psychology, are often called "Pavlovian reflexes" after the Russian physiologist, Ivan Pavlov*, who was the first to conduct systematic experiments, chiefly on dogs, to determine the exact nature of this neuro-physiological reaction. Actually, however, the phenomenon that Pavlov investigated was well known for centuries and extensively used in practice to train animals. The most famous of Pavlov's experiments was performed by giving a dog a chunk of meat at the ringing of a bell. After this has been done several times, the dog's reflexes are so conditioned that the animal will salivate abundantly when it hears the bell although he has no meat before him. For many centuries before Pavlov, however, conditioned re-

*At the time of the Bolshevik capture of Russia, Pavlov, who was almost seventy years old, failed to escape from Russia, but was not liquidated. He held the strange notion that scientific research was "non-political", and placed the results of his work at the disposal of the Bolsheviks, who rewarded him with a handsome pension and every facility for continuing his researches until his death in 1936. Of course, Pavlov conducted many other and more complicated experiments to reduce animals to total prostration by producing conflicts between established reflexes. These principles are, of course, applied by the Communists to destroy the victim's rationality, but the subject is too extensive to be discussed in this note. For further information, see any good treatise on neuro-psychological phenomena. For a brief outline, see Chapter Two of Edward Hunter's *Brainwashing*, New York, 1956; or later reprints. (*Tr.*)

flexes were used; for example, by gypsies to produce dancing bears. A small bear cub is walked over a sheet of metal under which there is a slow burning fire. As the sheet metal becomes warm, the soles of the little bear's feet begin to pain him and he lifts one foot after another, shifting his weight alternately to cool the soles of his feet. While he is doing this, drums are beaten. After this training has been repeated several times, the neurological association between the sound of the drums and the movement of the feet is established, and ever thereafter, the bear, although full grown, will begin to "dance" whenever he hears the beating of the drums. Such, reduced to its simplest terms, is the procedure for producing conditioned reflexes in irrational animals.

When the Communists apply this technique to their human subjects, they must first reduce their victims to the condition of animals.

When one destroys in man the moral and intellectual foundation of his being, his consciousness of personal identity and superiority, and thus deprives him of control over his own faculties by reason and will, man ceases to be a superior being. There is no longer any difference between man and animal. He will submit, as do animals, to biological impulses.

That is why, when he encountered unexpected opposition in a cell, Turcanu affirmed: "Your resistance is in vain. This system has been perfected and *used for twenty-five years** and so far it has never failed. You will become

*This means that the system used at Pitesti was put in operation in Russia immediately after the aged Pavlov spent three months in the Kremlin as the almost royal guest of Ulyanov, alias Lenin, for whom he prepared a secret 400-page manual on the ways of inducing conditioned reflexes and inhibitions in human beings. The first film to train Bolshevik secret police in Pavlovian methods was, so far as is known, produced in 1928. (*Tr.*)

convinced of this yourselves. I do not work haphazardly." The prison's warden, the Bolshevik Lieutenant Dumitrescu, stated several times in more than one cell, a little before the beginning of "re-education": "Even if you were made out of granite, you would not be able to resist all the way. Shortly you will see that I do not lie." At Pitesti, at least as far as the basic method was concerned, the experimenters improvised nothing; from the very first they applied a method that had worked innumerable times and whose results could be predicted with certainty.

How the system was elaborated and tested, I do not know, but its effects were certain. A mere reference to the tortures was like Professor Pavlov's bell or the gypsies' drum. A word was sufficient to trigger the reflex that pain and degradation had created, and the man was at once paralyzed and behaved as the experimenters wished.

Beginning with the prisoners from the "correction" category and from labor camps, the "re-educators" trained a group sufficiently large to handle the other categories of prisoners. This operation was facilitated by the distribution of the students among cells, which held from five to fifteen persons, who were thus always together but completely isolated from contact with others, since the cells were locked and shuttered from the outside both day and night. This isolation in small units facilitated the operation.

At first only a few, then more and more, and finally all the students went through "re-education". And *all* became finally, no matter how long they resisted, mindless docile creatures of which the supervisors made further use according to a well established plan. *There were no exceptions.* Only those who were so lucky as to die under torture and those who, profiting by some oversight on the

part of their tormentors, found a way to commit suicide, escaped the transformation.

Men who had for two years, day after day, night after night, defied the tortures and the bullets of the Communist Securitate, crumbled little by little under the Pavlovian technique and, overwhelmed by despair, terror, incertitude, were metamorphosed into zombies.

What radical transformations take place in the soul of one whose right of biological self-destruction is denied, who for years on end is kept in a state of living death with an ingenuity truly Satanic? What can survive systematic menticide? Heroism? Self-sacrifice? Ethical convictions? Idealism? Had the pagans during the persecutions of Christians used Communist methods, it is probable that the Christian calendar would number fewer saints and martyrs.

What could be more depressing than this thought? Among the victims of the Communists, *there are no heroes — there can be no heroes.*

Is heroism perhaps a simple state of psychic exaltation nourished by sentiment that depends on events and environment? Under the conditions created at Pitesti, not only could no one become a hero, but the very concept of heroism was obliterated.

If some day in the future it becomes possible thoroughly to investigate the applications of Bolshevik techniques and the profound mutations of the human psyche induced by them, civilized mankind will arraign and damn not the ephemeral creatures who carried out the techniques of torment, but the perennial originators of the appalling techniques that reduce man to a level inferior to that of animals.

After the first phase of procedure initiated in Hospital Room Four was completed and the victims had been reduced to the desired psychopathological state of passive desperation and animal helplessness, they were judged ripe for the next stage in the process. They were ready now for the second phase in which the prisoners would be brought to denounce one another spontaneously and without any instigation by the prison authorities.

Transfers from one cell to another were effected by prison authorities as Turcanu directed. They gave him a free hand to shuffle prisoners around as he thought expedient in the "unmasking" program, and he had at his disposal the entire list of condemned men, by which he could switch prisoners back and forth in various combinations. To hide his role, the transfers were always made by the prison guards on orders from above.

Turcanu had transfers made so that a group of students who had passed through the training given in Hospital Room Four shared a cell with a group of students who had heard nothing of the "unmasking" technique and naturally entertained — could entertain — no suspicion of the newcomers, who seemed to have been placed with them only by one of the seemingly random rearrangements of prisoners that the prison authorities frequently decreed. For two or three weeks, the "un-masked" students started discussions, criticized the Communist regime, and exchanged information seeking to loosen the tongues of their unsuspecting companions who were next in line for "re-education", in order to elicit from each at least several compromising statements for later use. Such statements were sought as a means of destroying, when the time came, first, the confidence and trust that the students then reposed in one another (for at that time no one who had

not been "re-educated" could even imagine what was in store for them) and second, their natural aversion to Communism.

The prisoners, who were deprived of all ordinary materials for writing, had long been accustomed secretly to use soap tablets for memoranda and even communication between cells. The newcomers — complying of course, with the instructions of the masters — took advantage of this custom and wrote down on these tablets everything they thought could be helpful in the coming "unmaskings". They concealed these inscribed tablets of soap and transmitted them to Turcanu or his assistants, either in the morning when they were taken out of the cell to the lavatory, or when they were called out by guards, ostensibly summoned to the main office, but really so that they could, without arousing suspicion, report to Turcanu in the corridor outside the cell. At other times, these soap tablets were hidden in predetermined places in the washroom, and collected, after the night lock-up, by agents of the Securitate. The records on soap were also given furtively to prison guards, to the persons who distributed the food, or to others whom the "re-educated" could on occasion approach in ways that excited no remark among their unsuspecting cellmates.

The "re-educators", of course, had no need for the information thus obtained and recorded; it could have been extracted anyway during the "unmaskings". This procedure was ordained for three reason: first, it confirmed each of the "re-educated" in his conditioned habit of hypocrisy and treachery toward his intended victims and simultaneously bound the "re-educated" together by their common guilt; second, the surreptitious provoking and recording of compromising statements kept the "re-educated" in a state

of constant vigilance and anxiety, for they realized that if, by some lingering sentiment of decency or sheer oversight, they were inefficient in their assumed roles, they would be given more "re-education" themselves; and finally, the production of such devastatingly complete and accurate information at the psychological moment would take the victims completely by surprise and stun them, so to speak, by a blow from inside.

After some weeks, when it was thought that enough compromising data had been collected, the "re-educators" in the cell were put into action. At that time, one of the leaders of the O.D.C.C., usually Turcanu himself, entered the cell escorted by several of his collaborators. The appearance of this contingent both reminded the "re-educated" in the cell of what they had undergone, thus triggering their conditioned reflexes, and had the practical effect of bringing in a team of strong bully-boys to avert the possibility that, as had happened in Hospital Room Four, a desperate resistance might make necessary the direct intervention of the prison authorities. The contingent that escorted Turcanu on such occasions was composed of well-fed, vigorous and husky men, not to mention Turcanu himself, who was truly a Hercules by comparison with the students who had been physically debilitated by the starvation diet to which they had been long and continuously subjected. Considering the fact that the bully-boys were precisely the trusties who did the work of distributing the food to each cell, it is obvious how they obtained ample nourishment, despite the official doctrine that all prisoners are "bandits" who must not be allowed "to live on the back of the working people". The intelligentsia who, from behind the scenes, directed the whole sinister tragedy, had arranged even such details in advance

so that nothing could happen to disturb the performance of their play.

After the contingent of "re-educators" entered a cell, a "meeting" began with a discourse, usually by Turcanu himself, consisting of the same stereotyped phrases that had been uttered in Hospital Room Four: "the need for 're-education'," "bandits who oppose it", "the necessity of breaking all resistance by no matter what means", etc., etc.* At the conclusion of the "speech", all the inmates of the cell, including the "re-educated" were asked to make their "unmasking" ("self-denouncement") immediately. The answer of the students was always the same, and likewise Turcanu's reaction: he gave the signal by lifting either his cap or his hand, and then, as in Hospital Room Four, began the beatings. But now the confusion and dismay of the victims was even greater, for they saw among their assailants their own cellmates, whom they had until that very moment regarded as brothers. Now these trusted comrades were suddenly dealing them desperate blows, in the back more often than not. How could they know the motivation for a transformation apparently instantaneous?

The "re-educators" exploited to the utmost that first moment of bewilderment. A man who had been a literary student described that moment to me in these words:

"When Turcanu ended his speech I thought he was crazy. And we all looked at one another in astonishment. But only a few moments elapsed. He raised his cap. That very instant, a friend, probably the best friend I had before we were arrested and a man in whom I had blind faith,

*Communist verbiage normally follows stereotyped patterns, but it may be noteworthy that the repetition here would serve more forcefully to remind the "re-educated" of the preliminaries to their transformation. (*Tr.*)

struck me full in my face with his fist, delivering so furious a blow that I was dazed. I looked at him in utter terror. My hands hung down, suddenly powerless. I was not capable of saying one word; I was simply unable to ask him why. He continued to strike me with the same desperation. I could not muster even the slightest resistance. At first I thought this was a nightmare or that all our minds had been suddenly darkened by a collective madness. Finally I tried to ask him something; I do not know anymore what it was. His reply was a rain of blows with his fists accompanied by facial expressions so hideous that they seemed to hurt me even more than the pummeling. It was only then that I somehow collected my wits and tried to defend myself. But from behind, another student, who had been brought into my cell at the same time as my friend some two weeks before, attacked me. This fellow was armed with a cudgel. I could not imagine where he had obtained it! I could not get out of the way anymore. I started to strike in desperation, at random, wherever I could. I tried to open a path towards the wall to protect my back, but someone with a cudgel landed a powerful blow on my left arm. Then another cudgel descended on my head. My body trembled. Other blows followed; they rained upon me. In the cell a frightening brawl was taking place. Groans, the thuds of cudgels, curses were blent into a chaotic uproar.

"After a while the cudgels broke, and the fight became body to body. But we were far fewer and weaker than our assailants. One by one we fell to the floor, physically unable to rise. Later, I lapsed into unconsciousness. How long I remained in that state, I do not know. When I came to, I was covered with blood and black and blue all over. My body was numb, yet it ached in every fibre. I could not move. My companions were in the same state. Tur-

canu had left the room, leaving us in the hands of his collaborators, the men, (including my erstwhile bosom friend) who had been brought into our cell two weeks before and who, as was now obvious to us, had come already appointed as our 're-education committee', a position they now openly assumed. What had just happened had created a bottomless abyss between us and them. Turcanu could breathe freely, for none of his men could now let him down. But at that bitter moment I did not imagine — could not have believed — that, in a few months, I myself would reach a condition in which I tortured others in order to 're-educate' them."

When the young man finished that narrative — this was several years after the "unmaskings" — an indescribable despair could be read on his face. Then he concluded: "By an unimaginable fatality, we became the gravediggers of our own aspirations, of our own souls. For never again will we be able to raise our heads. Christians once died happily for their faith. But we, also Christians, could not attain that happiness. We became the tools of the Communism that we heartily detested, in order mutually to destroy ourselves, in order to bury our dearest hopes in unique madness, hopes that we had nourished with much suffering and worldly renunciation. It was as if Satan had grabbed us from the hands of God. If I had then an opportunity to commit suicide, I would have wanted nothing more. But now, in my present state, I lack even the courage to do it. I may seem to be whole, but in reality I am only the wreck of myself, discredited in the eyes of my friends, and despised by my enemies. And yet, in essence, we were guilty of nothing, really."

In those scenes, the ratio of forces was usually two to one. Furthermore, the "re-educated" had been equipped

with bludgeons, cudgels, boards, and straps, and they were inspired by the strange induced hatred that drove them to reduce all prisoners to a common level, so that no one could look at another with accusing eyes. In that furious urge they vented their own agony born of the knowledge that they had been unable to resist, were not able to die before submitting.

Seldom did the guards have to intervene. But sometimes, despite the disproportion of numbers and strength, the desperation and resistance that followed the first moment of surprise and bewilderment, made it necessary to bring in re-enforcements for the "re-educators". The warden, Dumitrescu, always supervised through the peephole the progress of the "unmasking" inside, especially at the very beginning, which was the critical juncture.

In general, the first beating lasted between three and four hours, but in some cases it lasted through *nine consecutive hours,* for desperation awakens in man forces little known. The students were one by one eliminated from the fight. After each man had been beaten to immobility or unconsciousness, his skull cracked or his ribs broken, he was stripped and subjected to a minute personal search. Every article that could conceivably be used for protection or to commit suicide was taken and confiscated. Then the naked and inert bodies were shoved under the bunk-bed. As each man recovered consciousness, the beatings were resumed by the "re-education committee."

For days, those in the "position of unmasking" were subjected to this brutal regimen. Unable to resist or to defend themselves, kept under stringent surveillance, to prevent them from commiting suicide, their minds gradually succumbed to the utter despair that the "unmasking"

technique was designed to produce. And they abandoned themselves to the tortures, passively waiting with blighted consciousness for whatever was to happen to them.

The methods used in "unmaskings" were basically uniform. All means of attaining the calculated goal were, of course, sanctioned, and if there were some variations in the administration of torture, they were merely small details that the criminal mentalities of the various bosses were permitted to introduce into the fixed pattern of procedure.

CHAPTER VIII

A ROUTINE DAY

In Pitesti prison, the day began at five o'clock in the morning to allow time for the cleaning and straightening of the cell, which had to be done by six. This chore obligatorily fell upon the "Catholics", as those considered more "fanatical" or more resistant to "re-education" were called. The run-of-the-mill prisoners were put to work washing windows or doing other menial chores. Those who scrubbed the floors were compelled to carry "piggy-back" at least one of the "re-educated" and sometimes two or three of them, as prescribed by the "re-education committee". Floor scrubbing lasted until six o'clock, when the guards came around to take the head count. Often the warden himself or officers of the Securitate came to open the cells for inspection. The inmates were, of course, compelled to stand at attention, while the cell's leader, always one of the "re-educated", gave a report. Men who had been so tortured that they could not stand up, were put in the back row and supported under their arms by the "re-educated" — doubtless to spare the warden's feelings!

Following the morning inspection, the cells were said to be "open". At this time the students were taken out under guard to "wash" and to clean "the bucket" — a kind of wooden container used during the previous day for their necessities. According to a prison-wide rule of the "re-education committee" the use of this archaic toilet was restricted to urination. For other necessities, students

were permitted twice a day to use common toilets in the hall of their section of the prison.

There are some aspects of the life of a prisoner which are usually not mentioned, for the details are repugnant, but I must allude to them here because they formed one of the most carefully planned and effective elements of the program of "re-education".

The gamut of torment and humiliation to which the students were subjected was cunningly increased when they went to the lavatory and toilet. The time allowed one who was in the "state of unmasking" was too short even for the necessary preparation. It varied from thirty seconds or less to a maximum of one minute, the exact amount of time being left within these limits to the discretion of the one escorting the "bandit". Those who were unable to finish in the allotted time, were pulled out by the collar, beaten because they "sabotaged cleanliness", and hustled back into their cells, where they had to wait either until evening, or, if the incident occurred during the evening program, until the next morning. When this happened repeatedly in consecutive trips, the victim had to resort to other means much more humiliating. The same thing happened in the wash room, where one was hardly given the time to wet his hands. Of course, this program was continued with unrelenting thoroughness until the "unmasking" was completed.

This system of degradation was extensively applied in all the Securitate centers of Communist Romania. As an example I give only one case: In the summer of 1952 I was under interrogation at the Constanta Securitate. Sometime in August, Dr. Papahagi was brought into our cell. He used to be the chief medical officer of Tulcea County. Although he was a member of the Communist Party, he

had just been arrested for "Fascist" activity, supposedly carried out many years before when he was a pupil in a Romanian high school in Greece! The guards of the section in which he was confined were all from Tulcea, where he had practiced medicine for many years, and they knew him well. But nevertheless he was literally grabbed by his collar and kicked, undressed as he was, by an illiterate guard from Jurilofca. They gave him less than a minute to use the toilet. The doctor came back into the cell weeping. To that moment he had thought I was too emotional when I talked about the inhuman treatment that was our lot in prison!

Returned to their rooms, the students received the morning's food rations — a serving consisting of a spoonfull (250 cc.) of cornmeal soup, called *terci,* or the same quantity of tea. Students who were in "position of unmasking", had no right to eat as everybody else ate. They were forced to eat "hog-like", using only their mouths! They had to kneel down, hands behind their backs, or go down on all fours, if such was the command of the "re-education chief". In this position, they had to suck up the hot liquid from the mess-pan placed before them. The result was that the student ended with his lips burned. There was always initial resistance to this demand to behave like a hog, but after severe and prolonged torture everyone was finally compelled to submit.

A "bandit" was not allowed to wash his mess-pan after consuming its contents. The washing had to be done by licking, because the water distributed to cells could be used only by those already "re-educated". There was no running water in the cells. Trusties brought it in from the halls in wooden casks or similar vessels. Breakable containers that might give someone a means of committing suicide were forbidden.

Immediately after finishing "breakfast", those under "unmasking" took their "positions". Each was obliged to sit on the edge of the bed, his legs stretched out, his hands on his knees, his head lifted and looking always forward, without being allowed to turn it in either direction. Each was constantly watched over by a guard, recruited naturally from among those who already had gone through "unmaskings". The slightest deviation from the assigned position was summarily and severely punished by the guard, who then reported to his superior, the chief of the "re-education committee", who in his turn inflicted a supplementary chastisement.

The noon meal was served between eleven and twelve o'clock. Bread was distributed first. When the regular guard approached the cell, or when the familiar mealtime noise out in the hall was heard, at a given signal, everyone adopted as natural a position as possible "in order to keep the guard in the dark with respect to our activities in the cell", even though that guard had participated in an earlier phase of "unmasking", either on his own or under the direction of the warden or of an officer of the Securitate. Every student walked past the bread basket and meal barrel placed in the doorway to receive his portion. The moment the door of the cell was closed and locked, the discipline of "unmasking" was resumed. A "bandit" was not permitted to use his hands while eating his bread. Often, with his hands tied behind his back and the bread thrown in front of him, he was forced to eat it kneeling down and using only his mouth. The tiniest crumb had to be picked off the floor by his tongue or his lips! Sometimes the method was changed. A prisoner was permitted to use his hands in eating his bread, but then the nine-ounce hunk was broken into two or three pieces, each of which he had to stuff whole into his mouth.

The rest of the noon meal was served in essentially the same manner as the breakfast tea, except that at this meal, the torment was greater. In the morning the tea or the *terci* would cool a little if one stalled a bit, even if one was beaten for doing so, but the food at the noon meals, being somewhat thicker and usually consisting mainly of husked oats, took longer to cool. The "re-education committee" demanded that each "bandit" consume his meal as soon as possible; one of its members placed himself in front of the "bandit" and by beating, forced him to lap up the steaming food at once. The mess-pan was again cleaned by licking. Or, on other occasions, any form of cleaning was strictly forbidden, because the "enemies of the people" need no cleanliness ... After this, the prisoners resumed their assigned positions.

A slight interruption occurred at five o'clock. The warden or a chief guard went from cell to cell counting the prisoners. The positions taken were the same as those of the morning. Those who could not stand alone were placed in the back rows and were flanked by two "re-educated". After the six o'clock inspection, return to the assigned positions on the edge of the beds was continued until nine o'clock, when the "lights out" signal was given — (an anachronous term retained from the times when prisoners could turn off lights for the night). Under Communist rule, in the prisons of Romania — all prisons — lights burn in the cells all night. When the bell rang out in the hall, each prisoner had to go to bed, and talking after this time was punishable according to regulations. But "lights out" at Pitesti was the beginning of a new ordeal. After thirteen hours of continuous torment, the victims were allowed to sleep only in a prescribed position that was, perhaps, more cruel than the others. Stretched on his back, face up, his body out straight, with his hands above

the blanket covering his body to his chest, the student was not permitted to alter that sleeping position in any way. At his feet, with a bludgeon in his hands, stood watch a student guard; who in turn was tormented by lack of sleep and therefore the more antagonized by any resistance of his charge.

To whom does it not happen while sleeping, involuntarily, to turn on one side, or to raise his knees? A blow on the ankle-bone given with the full force of the arm brought the one who had moved again into the "correct" position. The watcher was obliged to strike a strong blow because he feared not only the "unmasking committee", but also the one whom he was watching. I do not mean that the recipient of the blow would request that he be struck a strong blow, but the watcher himself was apprehensive of being punished, should he show any pity. For when once a man's resistance was broken, he began to talk about "everything," and if the watcher did not strike him hard enough, he in the course of his "unmasking" would tell that on such and such an occasion he had been let off lightly by his watcher, who must therefore be a former friend, and must either have made an incomplete "unmasking" or had a recurrence of bourgeois thoughts and prejudices. Thus it often happened that watchers were forced back into the routine of "unmasking" for a second time, merely because someone denounced them for not having struck him hard enough during the "sleeping discipline"!

Following the first blow, sleep did not return, and sleeplessness took over. It was as if they were attending a wake for the dead — and began usually immediately or shortly after "lights-out."

Hours passed snail-paced; the victims tried to stay awake, afraid that they would turn or make some involun-

tary movement if they fell asleep, because a blow received under such circumstances has a terrific psychological effect. And when it happened that one nevertheless fell asleep, the sleep was not a normal sleep, but a kind of unconsciousness resulting from total exhaustion. Morning was expected with relief and return to the rigid position of "unmasking" came as a blessing!

How many secret supplications were made to Heaven, how many desperate minds sought to discover somewhere, even in the most fantastic and absurd conjectures, a ray of hope or a prospect of death! But neither came. For the time being only physical suffering filled their consciousness; the agony of the soul would come later. For the sufferers, time had ceased to exist except as a scarcely comprehended alternation between the light of day and that of the electric bulb overhead. And yet they resisted. The capacity to endure, that wonderful weapon of the soul that raised to sainthood so many ordinary mortals, was here also abundantly manifested.

The students endured and waited. It was a desperate waiting, endless, unnatural, for in their hearts they had known for a long time that they were utterly helpless and at the mercy of their torturers. They were convinced that in all the other prisons too, and perhaps outside as well, the system of decomposition by torture was being applied to everyone. They knew, too, that it was impossible to resist forever, for each man saw a former friend, whom he had known intimately and in whom he had previously had implicit faith, who had yielded, who had changed into a non-human. Yet, something inside still encouraged the victims to resist, to resist in the hidden depths of their minds.

When the patience of the "re-education committee" wore thin or rather when the unseen experts who directed everything from the shadows judged that the time had come, there was uttered the terrible question that everybody expected, from which no one was exempt.

"Bandit, have you decided to make your unmasking?"

Those who were already broken heard that question with a kind of painful relief and began to talk. They were then put through the entire procedure for the total disintegration of their souls.

But most of the students, even though they seemed broken, were obstinate and responded drily: "I have nothing to unmask. Everything I knew I confessed at the Securitate."

The "re-educators" considered that answer a defiance. It was only then that the "real beating" began.

Many were the students who provoked the beatings not only deliberately but eagerly — out of despair. The beatings gave them their only hope of dying. For everyone who preferred death to acceptance of degradation hoped desperately that during such a beating he might receive a fatal blow that would end his perpetual torment, and release him from the unbearable burden of life. But the directors of the experiment knew all of this, and so did the tormentors inside the cells, for many of them, when in the same situation, had longed and hoped for a death-dealing blow. They were under orders categorically forbidding such mercy. No blows were permitted on the temples, the region of the heart, the base of the head, or any other spot where a blow could be fatal. The physical death of students had to be prevented in order to kill the soul. The whole purpose, of course, of the unhuman di-

rectors was to extirpate the soul and replace it with conditioned reflexes. Only thus could they *create* the new man needed in the society of tomorrow of which they dream. In the jargon of the Marxist theory of dialectical materialism, such creation is called "dis-alienation"*. It is attained by a crucifixion of the soul ending in moral, not physical, death.

When the longed-for death did not come, men craved for the blow that would make them unconscious, their only way of escaping for even a few moments from the inferno invented by those who promise mankind paradise on earth.

*Marx said that men, because of religion, became alienated, in other words, that they lost their original and correct direction. "Dis-alienation," then, is the process of bringing the individual back to a form of "reasoning" uncontaminated by religious superstitions and by the burden of several thousands of years of "slavery".

CHAPTER IX

THE CATHOLICS

From the beginning, at the time when the files of those who were to pass into "unmaskings" were compiled, students were divided into two groups according to their soul's strength or to the role played as members of the resistance organizations. The first category consisted of the less spirited students with an indeterminate record of activity, who thus were not good timber for the making of the "new man," but whose weakness was yet not sufficient reason to exempt them from unmaskings. They also were passed through the entire gamut of disintegregation but usually with less insistence and not very extensive tortures. These were the ones who fell earlier than others when the question, "You bandit, have you decided to make your unmasking?" was put to them. Their number was not very large in relation to the total number arrested. They were named by the unmaskers *gugustiuci,* an ironic term meaning "wild pigeons," in other words, creatures not entirely responsible for their present plight.

The second category, which gave the initiators many a headache although it suited their purposes better, included the more spirited, fanatical students, those who resisted a long time, those who had to be passed through a second cycle of tortures before being broken. These were called "Catholics."

One of the tests for the fanatical students was forced gymnastics, especially the semi-squat or "frog." To touch the heels with the buttocks was not permitted, and the

hands had to be held laterally the whole time, stretched out, or raised high above the head. During this semi-squat posture, the student had to raise and lower himself in time to a rhythm set by the re-educator by hitting on wood with a stick hours on end, uninterruptedly.

Normally and without any coercion, a man in good physical condition can do up to fifty flexions of this kind, after which his legs begin to stiffen. The student A.D. from the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest, arrested in 1948 and sentenced to ten years, did in a single night, above the portable toilet, over one thousand. When he stepped down he still had the strength to continue; it was the fatigue of the rhythm-beater which stopped the performance. To what mysterious force can be attributed this physical resistance on the part of a man exhausted by malnutrition, sleepless nights, and the obligatory positions imposed on him in the days preceding this test? For this case is but one from among the hundreds of victims who managed to pass the one thousand-mark of such flexions without breaking down. Only strength of will, a manifestation of spirit, could thus temporarily overcome the body's fatigue and successfully control it.

The student M.M., also from the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest, was subjected to the following procedure. After everything else had been tried on him, including beating till his body became almost insensitive to further blows, he was forced one day to lie down on the floor in the middle of the room. Other students, chosen according to their degree of "banditry" (i.e., resistance), were forced to lie down on him, one after another, until in all there were seventeen — all those, in other words, who were in the process of unmasking in that cell at that time. On top of all then climbed the individual who was committee

chief in the room. Under the pressure of all this weight the student could no longer control himself; the muscles of his abdomen gave way and everything that had been forbidden him to do over the toilet he did there in the cell.

What followed enters directly into the domain of madness. Under the pretext that he had broken rules and dirtied the room, and that no washing of clothes is permitted outside a scheduled time, the poor student was ordered to clean his underwear by mouth. His refusal to submit to this command infuriated the committee chief so much that he grabbed a chunk of wood and crushed the student's fingers beneath it, then trampled the student underfoot till he became unconscious. He then had water brought to restore consciousness — water which had been refused earlier for cleanliness. The student's head was then knocked against floor and wall and he was dragged around the room by his feet until blood flowed out of his mouth freely. Finally he could no longer resist.

In the face of such pain there can be no hero.

The student A.O. of the Faculty of Theology, one of the most "fanatical" mystics in the cells of Pitesti, was forced to move his bowels into his mess-pan, then to receive his meal without being permitted to wash it. What he had to suffer until his resistance and abhorrence broke in him, is difficult to describe. But in the end he had to yield and to eat everything in the dish.

Prisoners were obliged to stand on their feet without so much as moving a muscle. They were forced to wipe the floor over and over for whole days at a time, carrying two, or sometimes three other prisoners "piggy-back" as they pushed the cleaning rag.

Heavily tortured were those students who, unable to endure any longer but also unwilling to yield, tried to commit suicide. Such attempts, however, were made almost impossible by preventive measures taken by the re-educators and the frequent inspections by O.D.C.C. committees and by the administration. Besides, there was practically no object with which to commit suicide. Still, some cases of its having been tried are on record. Those who failed in the attempt were tortured as were also those suspected of contemplating suicide.

The student R.M. at the Polytechnical School of Bucharest had kept his spectacles in the cell as a result of his own honest mistake and because of the committee's lack of attention. One day, as he was being beaten, they broke his glasses. R. was forced to pick up the pieces, under blows, and to reconstitute both lenses. Although he searched a long time, he could not find the last small piece. Accusing him of having hid it in order later to commit suicide, the student, Diaca, of the Faculty of Medicine of Iasi who was charged with his surveillance, beat him in such a manner that R. urinated blood. Nobody was troubled by this and no doctor was summoned to look after him.

The student C.S. of the Faculty of Law of Cluj, endowed with an amazing capacity of resistance, finally came to realize that he could not hold out much longer and decided to commit suicide. But how? He could find nothing at hand. In desperation he ate a pound of soap kept under the bed for writing declarations! As he later revealed to me, even though the soap was made from petrol residue, he suffered not even the slightest intestinal upset!

A student of the Faculty of Theology of Timisoara, N.V., after failing to die from slashing his wrists, thrust his head into the food barrel, hoping to die burnt from the

hot meal. But this, too, failed, and at enormous cost to him. He was beaten until his lungs were dislodged, and when he shared the same cell with me five years later, he was still suffering from that painful infirmity. All because he failed to kill himself.

Many were those who tried to cut their veins with a scrap of sheet iron found somewhere, or with wood chips, or pieces of glass, or tried to crush their skulls against walls, etc. There were also some who tried to sever their arteries with their own teeth. That is why every effort was made to prevent such "sabotaging" of the "campaign of unmasking."

The student Gheorghe Serban, from the little town of Murfatlar, was arrested in Bucharest in 1948, condemned with a large number of others and sent to Pitesti where he was subjected to the usual unmaskings. One day, however, as he was taken out into the hall, he succeeded in ending his torment by jumping from the prison's third floor down the stairwell. When those from whom he had escaped reached the ground floor in panic, Serban had passed into the other world, uncompromised. The measure taken by the administration to prevent such a thing happening again was to stretch wire nets between floors. At the same time surveillance inside the cells was intensified, and fresh inspections, this time made by prison guards under the supervision of the prison's director, Dumitrescu, emptied the cells of everything that could possibly serve as a means of suicide.

Endeavors to call the administration's attention directly to their situation were made several times by those enduring the tortures, but the administration remained deaf to all complaints. Not only did it not respond as hoped, but on the contrary took harsher measures against those

that petitioned. They were put through what was called a "supplementary unmasking." Some examples of this follow.

The student A.R., who had performed a thousand flexions crouched over the toilet, following several weeks of tortures, and though knowing what was in store for him, one evening at closing time broke out from the second row where he was being supported by re-educators, and stepped out in front of Director Dumitrescu, who had just arrived to take the "counting." A.R. reported everything going on in the cells and requested Dumitrescu to intervene with his authority as director and order the tortures ended and the torturers punished. He also said that he personally did not intend to make any kind of unmasking, that he knew the reasons for his imprisonment — which he did not regret — and consequently he should be left in peace to serve his sentence out, to decide for himself what he thought detrimental to society.

The director listened attentively, simulating complete surprise. He answered that he did not even suspect such things, such atrocities, were taking place. He could say this with effrontery because although there were some among the "unmasked" present who had been beaten by the director himself in Room Four, they could not speak for they were no longer their former selves. It was too late to do anything about it that evening but Dumitrescu promised to attend to this matter next day — which he did: he sent Turcanu into the cell to take revenge on A. R. for his indiscretion.

Another student, U.S., taking advantage one day of the door's being left unlocked by a careless guard, escaped from under the bludgeon and darted out into the hall intending to get to the main office or even the director's office. But to his

surprise, he collided just outside the door with the director himself! Dumitrescu had been looking through the peephole to check on what was going on inside the cell. The student requested him in strong terms to intervene in the cell and establish order, and demanded that he be taken before the political officer who was the real director of the prison. Taken aback, the director could not avoid saying something, so, to get rid of the angry student faster, promised to ask the officer to see him. The student had to get back in the cell, where he received appropriate punishment. The next day, called out early, he was taken not to the political officer but to Turcanu, who during the interrogation toyed with a sharp razor in his hands.

"You told the director that if he would not excuse you from the unmaskings and take you to see the political officer, you'd do anything in your power to commit suicide. Do you have the courage for such an act? Look, I want to help you. Here is an ordinary razor. Take it and commit suicide. But here in front of me, now." And he stretched out his left hand, offering the razor.

"A ray of hope engulfed me," the student told me later in another Romanian Communist prison. "If I had gotten hold of that razor for even a second, I could have cut his throat. I could have found that much strength if I succeeded in catching him off guard, then I would have killed myself. But nothing I hoped for happened. The moment I reached out to take the razor, Turcanu pulled back his left hand and with his right struck me under the chin such a blow that I fell flattened to the cement floor. He was powerful as a bull. Then he jumped on me with both feet. How long this lasted I do not know, as I passed out during this part of the 'interview.' When they took me out of the bathroom — for all this took place there —

three of my ribs were broken. The scar formed afterwards will remain with me to my grave; the broken ribs will permanently keep the imprint of Turcanu's feet."

And to convince me of this he had me touch the broken ribs under the thin yellow skin.

Not only were these things all reported to the director, but the chief guards of the prison, Ciobanu and Mandruta, received innumerable verbal reports of such atrocities. Mandruta always swore and cursed and slammed the door as he left saying this was none of his business, while Ciobanu merely shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. Later, in Gherla prison, I shared a cell with Ciobanu's father-in-law, but in telling him of these atrocities, he could not believe that his son-in-law had ever been a witness to them as he had never breathed a word at home about such things. During the two-year experiment at Pitesti, perhaps he had had to go through a "school of threatenings" to get the job at all, in the interior of the prison, and was afraid to tell of anything going on. But the guards, at any rate, were only the facade to conceal the real authors of this villainy, the *politruks* of the Communist Party.

* * * * *

Resistance in prisons depended naturally on the factor of moral order. As long as he could retain self-confidence, the student defied his re-educators, though passively. I know several hundred of the students who passed through unmaskings at Pitesti, having spent years living with them in various prisons. I studied them under all aspects both before and after the unmaskings, and I hold the firm conviction that at least fifty of them would have stepped calmly before a firing squad, thus sealing their creed with the supreme sacrifice, *before* the Securitate arrest and investi-

gation. Who is not familiar with the capacity for sacrifice of the Romanian youth in the war against Communism, willing to die, even after the Communist occupation, in resisting it? The Legionaries Puiu Constantin, Florescu, Spiru Obreja, Serban Secu, for example, who were executed on order of the Military Tribunal of Bucharest in 1950-51, knowing they were to be killed, refused to sign a petition of pardon presented by a special envoy from the Ministry of the Interior.

Eighteen others arrested in the Fagaras Mountains had the same fate in the summer of 1958. During these eight years, all over the country, people were shot by the hundreds, with or without being sentenced, and died bravely. I knew before my own arrest many students who were members of resistance groups and fled to the hills, where they were pursued but fought the Securitate forces till they fell; few allowed themselves to be taken prisoner. But those who got to Pitesti, collapsed morally. What accounts for this change in behavior? Perhaps those who were still free to dispose of their own lives, preferred to die at the hands of the enemy; while those who were captured, finding themselves no longer free even to kill themselves, therefore collapsed.

But the intensity of the drama and the terror that dominated this period will never be known.

"What we lived through there," said one student, whom I had known long before any arrests, and who had passed through unmaskings as one of the most fanatical, "surpasses what the human mind can imagine. Language is inadequate to completely convey what everyone of us would have to say, even if we could say it."

Hungry, tortured, humiliated for weeks and months on end; sleepless, terrified, terrorized, struck by him who but

an hour earlier had been his friend and brother in chains; forced in his turn, through the threatening of Satan, to become a torturer of others; without the slightest hope of escape; isolated from the world by a curtain of steel; brought to the edge of the grave but denied the privilege of dying — of such was comprised the calendar of a student subjected to this experiment of de-personalization. In short, he was subjected to the "ethics" of the Communist Party.

Under such treatment, I believe no man could successfully resist. Let me give two examples pointing up the difference in reaction of two students under two investigations, one after arrest by the Securitate, the other later at Pitesti, during unmaskings.

When being investigated, the student had, as did any other detainee, several elements in his favor: he knew he would be arrested, he knew the methods of the investigators, and he knew the Communist to be a foreign element, a stooge of the Bolsheviks, whom he must confront. In other words, this meant a confrontation between two forces, the one Romanian, the other the foreign element of occupation. Because the Securitate arrested large numbers of persons at one time, and space was limited, they could not always give individualized attention to each prisoner nor did this concern them; they knew that the Pitesti Experiment would take care of the details. Their main concern was to get a confession, true or false, as quickly as possible, and send him before the military judge for sentencing.

The student Alupoaei, a former detainee of the Antonescu regime, was arrested in the summer of 1948 and accused of subversive activities against Communism. He was investigated at the Iasi Securitate by officers Fischer

and Pompilian, but despite all the torture to which he was subjected, they got no compromising declaration out of him. Their report to the Ministry of the Interior after several months of intensive investigation still was the same — they could not detect subversive activities by any youth organization in the Suceava region. But at Pitesti, after the regime of unmasking, Alupoaei told everything he knew, betrayed everything!

Another student, Gh. Cucole from Constanta, was also arrested in the summer of 1948. He was interrogated by a long-time Communist, Campeanu, who had fought in the International Brigade in Spain and was now a colonel in the Ministry of the Interior. (He fell into disgrace later and was treated as he had treated others.) Cucole's torturer was a Lieutenant Botea, a Bulgarian* waiter considered one of the most brutal and cruel men in the entire Communist police force. (Botea was later arrested himself.) Cucole was kept in chains for months with only half a pound of bread and a cup of water for his daily food. Depositions by colleagues or friends who had been active with him were placed before him, but he denied them all. While he was incarcerated, his sufferings day after day were noted by a fellow prisoner, Major X, who told me about him at Aiud in 1951, speaking of him as of a hero. Cucole never did give the Securitate the confession they wanted, so he was finally condemned to prison on the basis of depositions from others. He was sent to Pitesti, and there he talked, revealing not only what he had done but also what he planned to do, whom he considered an enemy of the regime, and whom he suspected of subversive activity. As a result of his declarations, more than 60 Mace-

*The author uses "Bulgarian," "Hungarian," etc., to refer to the family background of an individual, even though he may have been born in Romania. This has been common practice in Romania — to distinguish ethnic origins.

donians were arrested in the Constanta region and in Bucharest. D., a student from Iasi, who was in the same cell, told me later that during Cucole's unmasking he had to be wrapped three days and nights in wet sheets to keep him alive after the day-long tortures by Titus Leonida and Turcanu. I myself met him after the unmaskings, and I did not recognize him. Not only was he not the man he had been but something in his very mind was shaken.

I do not think there was a single student who declared everything under the Securitate investigation. Everyone kept some secret, greater or smaller; but at Pitesti prison, no one could resist. The number of those arrested as a result of testimony given or extorted at Pitesti during the unmaskings was at least 3000!

Was anything left unrevealed at Pitesti? Very little, and that only because it was known only to the individual under investigation. For if there existed the slightest suspicion that someone else knew the secret, the one being tortured hastened to tell it lest the other beat him to it, and he be passed through unmaskings for the second or third time. Since students were usually active in groups, it was difficult to keep anything back when one knew that if the same system was being used in other prisons, a dossier would be compiled from declarations made by fellow students incarcerated in Aiud, or Gherla, or somewhere else. And no one coming to Pitesti from other prisons was ever able to warn the students or tell them what was happening in the other prisons, as new arrivals were isolated immediately; first, so that they could not transmit news from the outside world to those undergoing unmasking, and second, so that the new arrivals could not receive any kind of warning of what was in store for them before their turn came.

Those who dared to conceal some detail, however trivial, were found out — a month, or a year later, — and had to pass a second or even a third time under the bludgeons of the torturers. And each time the unmasking was more Draconian because the individual had continued being a "bandit." Nothing that two or more knew could be kept secret, for each would tell it, having no way of knowing whether the other had already told it and had become in his turn an unmasker. An infernal cycle from which there was no escape!

There is, for example, the case of student T. from Bucharest's Faculty of Medicine. After he passed through unmaskings and had convinced the O.D.C.C. that he had told everything he knew, somebody from another room revealed facts he had withheld.

He was put through a second unmasking and tortured almost to disfigurement. He finally admitted the facts he had concealed before, and added another detail. For this he was taken through a third unmasking, but this time only as a viewer of the torturing of others, being placed in "position." As he had been seated alone on the edge of the bunk bed, with no special attention paid to him, he took it upon himself to request the "watch" to call Turcanu in, for he had something to tell him. Turcanu came in but refused to listen. Then desperately T. implored him:

"This is the time to listen to me. I can no longer stand it; I must speak to you right now. If you lose this opportunity, you will not get anything out of me even if you skin me alive with a razor."

Turcanu naturally took advantage of this psychological moment and listened. T. told him everything, absolutely

all that up to then he had managed to hide, and which was infinitely more revealing than what he had told in the two earlier unmaskings. Several years later he said, "I cannot understand what happened in my soul that I should have volunteered to talk that time, especially when I was sure the O.D.C.C. had come to the conclusion that I had already revealed everything."

A second case was that of Teodoru, a medical student at Cluj. He was passed through unmasking, tortured, and considered "irrecoverable" even though he willingly did and said all that was expected of him. But when the unmaskings were over, and the terror of "re-education" had lost much of its virulence, Teodoru switched to the other extreme, becoming one of the most dangerous denouncers, with not the slightest excuse for this change of attitude, this strange new viciousness.

And even stranger things happened, which might explain the numerous Moscow trials that resulted in the liquidation of all those considered Stalin's personal enemies. Crimes were invented, not by investigators but by those being tortured by the investigators. A prisoner, hoping to be spared further torture by convincing his unmasker that he had revealed everything, the whole truth, would resort to lying, and invent things that could never have taken place, not even in his imagination.

The Polytechnical student O.O., arrested for failing to denounce anyone during the first phase of his unmasking, invented and made up from bits and pieces an entire subversive organization into which he grouped, besides his own classmates, almost all the instructors, the tutors, lecturers, even a few professors, making himself, naturally, the leader.

Many, fearing further torture at first, but later out of a new-found desire to "restructure and re-educate themselves in the new spirit" (in other words, sheer madness), tried to prove their "sincerity" by giving the names of their parents or relatives as members of an organization of their own.

All verbal declarations were recorded on soap tablets and forwarded directly to the O.D.C.C. Special Investigations Office, where they were transcribed and all declarations from the beginning were screened, compared, and fine-combed to find any minute discrepancies in reports from two or more individuals relative to the same fact. If the screening turned up discrepancies of any importance to the Securitate, each prisoner involved was called in to the office, made to put down his declaration on paper and sign it, after which it was sent to the Ministry of the Interior through the political officer.

As you can see, the Ministry had no official contact or concern with what went on at Pitesti; in fact, the information thus extorted was only incidental to the real purpose. For no matter how useful the students' revelations might become, there must be no let-up in the torment. The state of torture must continue for the simple reason that continuous physical (and resulting moral) terror is indispensable to the flawless functioning of conditioned reflexes — reflexes that will go on functioning automatically long after the subject of the experiment has passed through the fire and become himself a torturer of others.

CHAPTER X

THE STAGES

"I, the undersigned bandit (Name and biographical data inserted here) unmask!"

Thus began the "declaration" that was to take the student who consented to make it (and who could refuse?) down the road of degradation to an enforced, inhuman transformation of character inconceivable to a normal human being. Until this declaration was made, the student had somehow kept some part of his personality intact — his soul proper was not irremediably affected, or so the unmaskers thought. He would not yet readily betray those whom he, though under torture, had managed to protect during the Securitate's investigations.

The real tragedy, however, began immediately following the "outer" unmasking, and the "prison activity." It was necessary in the project to repress any tendency to return to an anti-Marxist equilibrium, which was based on the following principles of life: faith in God, tradition and family; trust in the political personalities who led the anti-Communist resistance materially and morally; friendship; love in its usual worldly sense and love of mankind in general; and, finally, one's own ego, with its own intimate life and its anxieties. Such, in fact, were the pillars sustaining the Romanian people, which was born Christian, you might say. There is no recorded historical date of a transition from an earlier faith to Christianity, as in the case of most European peoples. When the fusion of con-

quering Romans and vanquished Dacians was consummated, the resulting nation was both Christian and Romanian at the same time. From the moment of entering history to the present day, with very few periods of peace in a long chain of painful tribulations, the Romanian people defended equally their own independence as a nation and their Christian faith — a Latin island lost in a Slavic sea.

Attacked throughout the centuries by all nations which it has had the misfortune to have as neighbors, Romania alone has never nourished any desire for conquest. Her struggles have been for defense, for inner living, for getting closer to God. For the Romanian, altar and plowed land blend together. When no ray of hope, of help, came from anywhere, the Romanian has knelt in front of the despoiled altar to invoke God's help. Innumerable monasteries, retreats, and crosses set up throughout the countryside, at almost every crossroad, are proofs of the place God occupies in the life of the Romanian people. This faith constituted, and constitutes even today, one of the strongest supports of the resistance to Communism. Romanians have today gathered in the shadows of the altar, even though they know it to be the greatest of risks, whose consequences cannot be guessed at by one who has not actually lived today's drama of our people.

If the Communists have not bothered the Church officially, it is because they feared the consequences. Uprisings in the name of one's faith, especially if supported by a nation in the throes of despair, are much more dangerous than those of a strictly social-economic nature. So out in the country, the Church was perforce allowed to function within certain limits, but such toleration inside the prison walls was out of the question. The churches of the old

Aiud prison, for instance, were transformed into coal-bins (the Eastern Orthodox), oats-bins for horses (the Catholic) and a wood-shed (Protestant). The priests not only had no place to officiate, but they were even forbidden to hold services in the cells.

In Pitesti prison the terror exceeded all limits, as this was the place where the prime guinea pigs, the students, were brought. The cruelest torments fell upon the heads of the "mystic" groups made up of the more intensely religious students, who had been first imprisoned by Antonescu following the so-called "rebellion" of Jan. 21-24, 1941. Their numbers were later augmented with numerous freshly arrested students, particularly from the Faculties of Theology and Philosophy in Bucharest, Cluj and Timisoara Universities. This persecution of Christian students, in intensity, length of time and more particularly in method, perhaps surpassed that of the early Christian martyrs who died in the arenas on crosses or at the stake, in pits with wild beasts, or as human torches, giving up the ghost in a matter of minutes. In Pitesti, the martyrdom lasted for months, hour after hour.

What heathen emperors had demanded of the martyrs — renunciation of faith, denial of God and of Jesus — was forcibly induced in prisoners. A simple denial, a formal promise not to believe or pray or fight for this "false" faith, was not enough. It had to be accompanied by a whole set of proofs, including first of all the ridiculing of the Savior's name by use of the most insulting epithets. Some accordingly alleged that Christ spent the first thirty years of His life in India learning to be a fakir; others said He was a quack, a cheat and speculator in the faith and superstition of the people, who were kept uneducated by the priests. Some denied His historical existence.

Others presented Him as a utopian socialist revolutionary, initially animated by good intentions but in the end coveting the throne of Judea; they said His condemnation resulted from a power struggle between Him and leaders of the Hebrew people, who were subservient to and thus accomplices of the Romans! His morals were placed under the microscope, and Gospel references to Mary Magdalene interpreted to mean the relationship was one of worldly love. The Virgin Mary, His Mother, was labeled a woman of loose morals who deserved not sanctification but a prison sentence for adultery. And through it all, the Leninist slogan, "Christian superstition, the opiate of the people" was the constant theme.

In order to extinguish the last trace of respect for holy things, ritual parodies of all Christian ceremonies were arranged, with students of theology compelled to modify prayer texts, substituting vulgar oaths for religious phrases. Holy Week and Easter were made occasions of particular vilification by the O.D.C.C.

The "rehabilitated" were often obliged, if they did not proceed on their own initiative, to stage spiritual orgies ridiculing Jesus. I shall relate only one scene of many. It took place in the section occupied by those condemned to hard labor, at Easter 1950.

"Christ's robe," as the students called it, was improvised from a few white shirts and bed sheets. Out of the soap used for inscribing declarations a masculine genital organ was made and the theology student chosen to play the part of Jesus was forced to hang it around his neck. He was compelled to walk about the room, receiving severe blows from broomsticks, to symbolize the road to Golgotha. He was finally stopped by the window. There the rest of the

students had to file past him, making the sign of the cross and kissing the piece of soap, exclaiming, "I pray to your omnipotence, only true master of those who believe," etc.

There was only one, a youth named B., who refused to stoop to this sacrilege. He was only a high-school student, and although tortured for hours in front of the others in order to force him to do it, he stood firm. Finally it was the re-educators who gave up, but no one could find out what made them stop. This conduct was particularly strange, it being the first time the tormentors had stopped short of achieving complete obedience to their commands. Could it be that perhaps the tender age of the youth had aroused in their dry, and at the same time terrorized, souls, a trace of pity? If so, the tender age did not deter them from bludgeoning B. into unconsciousness several times.

The individual who related this event to me was at the time sharing B's cell, and he was himself a participating victim. I asked him how he felt when he saw that a man younger than himself and not having his ideological background could have the strength to refuse till the end.

"At first, pity," he said, "because of the way he was tortured; then a kind of anger seeing that he did not give in; and finally shame and contempt toward myself. At the moment I became aware of the implications of harboring these thoughts, I experienced a real shock of terror. If the person who had unmasked me, still in our cell, could have learned my thoughts at that moment, he would have ripped me to pieces."

"How could he find out," I asked, "if this was only a thought?"

"All he had to do was to place me in the unmasking position and ask me to reveal my thoughts at the time B. was refusing. In the end, I am sure I would have told . . ."

Such travesties of this sort, some even more vile, were enacted in all cells Sunday after Sunday. Each religious holiday was an occasion for some novel profanation.

Those who were undergoing unmaskings were watched closely especially in the evening, because they were then permitted to lie down in bed and might seek solace in their faith. A far-away look, prolonged staring at the ceiling, a look of serenity — any of these was considered sufficient indication of prayer, and he who was caught in such an attitude was brought back to reality by a powerful bludgeon on his ankle bones. Next morning the victim so surprised received from the committee his due.

A simple trembling of the lips was considered the equivalent to praying aloud. The morning beating was mandatorily followed by a declaration made in front of all, in which the inmate in question had to admit he erred, that the "bandit" within him was not yet vanquished, that he had committed an unspeakable crime, and that he promised never even to think of praying again; and furthermore that if he should catch someone else seeming to commit the same crime of praying in bed, he would report him mercilessly and thus help rid himself of "banditism" sooner!

All students were forced to deny and revile Christianity, whether they believed in God or not.

The Church had to be denounced as an organization under whose mask of faith swindles were perpetrated, plots were hatched, extra-marital rendezvous were arranged with the priest's cooperation, young girls were corrupted, women came to show off and men to seek bodies. Or the Church was described as the place where the fight against the Communist Party was organized, where, in the shadow of

the holy icons, arrangements were made for the assassination of the leaders of the working people, etc. As there were no priests among the students imprisoned at Pitesti, the O.D.C.C.'s anger was directed against the sons of priests. Through their mouths must the Church be denigrated; they themselves must delineate their fathers in the blackest possible terms, so that the others would have this information from "eyewitnesses."

Jokes and anecdotes about the clergy, that were making the rounds of Romanian villages, were now naturally given the stamp of authenticity. The priest had to be described as a drunkard, skirt-chaser, card player, and thief, contemptuous of the misery of the people (and especially the peasants), an inveterate liar who had sold out to the class of capitalist exploiters, had been an agent of the Nazis or of the former Securitate, and was in fact responsible for the complete breakdown of village morality.

For all these epithets, proofs had to be found; whoever supplied the "proofs" had to sound convincing so that his revelations would lead to other unmaskings. Both those who made the required statements and those who directed the unmaskings knew that the testimony was absurd, but the more monstrous these inventions were, the more pleased were the unmaskers. Such lies made it impossible for those who told them to look parents or friends in the eye ever again, or step over the threshold of a church, if they ever regained their freedom. The memory of unmaskings would be a lingering torture after their liberation.

The second principal element in the destruction of faith was denigration of the monastic life. Students were forced to say that they heard things "with their own ears," and saw things "with their own eyes." Any monk being dis-

cussed had to have on his record at least several adulterous affairs in the villages near his monastery; the nuns several abortions! Among the stories told by a student from Moldavia, I shall mention the following monstrous lies. He said that at the request of a high dignitary (whose name escaped him!) a small lake in the neighborhood of a convent was drained. On the bottom were found several hundred skeletons of newborn infants, who had, of course, been drowned so as not to compromise the convent. All this was done with the connivance of the Mother Superior and the leading heads of the Church. If the whole affair was hushed up, it was because the hierarchy desired it! Nothing was done to stop this lustful life, in fact it was encouraged, and the only one to suffer was the individual who demanded an investigation!

As to the monks, it was positively affirmed that they were all spies for secret American agencies, they would hide parachutists who came to commit acts of political and military sabotage; they used their monasteries as storage places for weapons to be used the moment war should break out; problems of faith concerned them not at all; persons wanted by the Securitate for anti-Communist activity were given food and shelter by the monks; all in all, the monks should be considered highway robbers rather than servants of the people.

In order to make students bear witness to such things, a whole gamut of tortures was necessary. But in this way, the first stage of the inner unmasking, that of breaking away from God, was accomplished. Thus, the students were sufficiently prepared to go on to the second stage, the breakaway from tradition.

The education of students, structured on everything they had already learned in the home, was based on the culti-

vation of a healthy rural tradition on the one hand, and a historical one on the other. The roots of the past were the foundation on which the Romanian people leaned in time of vicissitude and trial. Remembering the past of their nation, Romanians confront the trials of today with faith and hope for future freedom. Especially in rural environments one finds even today traditional conservatism so deeply rooted that it is the peasants or the peasants' sons who give Moscovites the worst headaches.

Coming from such a background, the students in colleges kept unaltered their rural culture and tradition. Their advanced education merely added the scientific and historical knowledge needed to bolster their convictions.

Communist propaganda said that the majority of school children come from the middle and upper classes and that the schools, like other institutions, were unequivocally in the service of the ruling class. Previous to 1944, say the Communists, the school was a reactionary institution whose purpose was not to prepare and educate "the sons of the people," but to prepare the recruits for the ruling class to assure continuity of the regime in power. If they thought it not feasible or desirable to denigrate some well-known representative of the intellectual world, they described him as a rare exception to the general rule.

The following cliches about the academic system were repeated *ad infinitum*: "It was in the service of imperialism;" "It sowed discord among ethnic minorities;" "It falsified history;" "It altered the student's soul by a chauvinistic education which neglected every scientific criterion;" "It ideologically nourished hatred of the Russian people in the past, now hatred of Communism;" "It sup-

ported the Fascist war of 1941-44;" "It falsified the fact that the Czar helped in gaining our independence in 1877, presenting the opposite of the truth." (With regard to this last, no Romanian student was unfamiliar with the historical fact that it was the intervention of Bismarck that induced the Russians to withdraw from our Principalities* in 1880, and that, instead of being thankful for our help in the war against the Turks, they took away from us again the three counties in Bessarabia!† The students also knew all too well that in 1924 Communist agents attempted an insurrection in the Romanian province of Bessarabia —

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*The autonomous principalities of Walachia and Moldavia were united in the person of their ruler when Alexander Cuza became Prince of both in 1859, but, at the insistence of the European powers, separate governments were maintained in the two principalities for some years thereafter. Romania became a kingdom in 1881.

†When Russia declared war on Turkey in 1877, Romania, although she had painful memories of the Russian occupation in 1853, which had been terminated only by Austrian protests and pressure, allied herself with Russia, permitted Russian troops to pass through her borders and base themselves on her territory, and sent into the field her army, under the command of Prince Charles. The Romanian troops compensated for the overconfidence and military ineptitude of the Russian forces, and thus made possible the Russian victory in 1878. Romania recovered some territory from Turkey, but Russia demanded from her ally the retrocession of Bessarabia, which had been a part of Moldavia since 1856 and had a population that was almost entirely Romanian. The Great Powers, who were most interested in forcing Romania to repeal provisions in her Constitution that restricted the power of resident Jews to control the country by financial manipulation, moral corruption, and political infiltration, abandoned Romania, which had to yield reluctantly to Russian demands and cede part of her territory to the erstwhile ally whom she had saved, if not from ultimate defeat, certainly from a prolonged and difficult war. Even then, Russia delayed withdrawal of the troops that she had brought into the territory of her ally during the war, and her claims were not finally settled until 1884. The conduct of Russia at this time was such that the Prime Minister of Great Britain, although himself a Jew residing in England, felt constrained to remark that "in politics ingratitude is often the reward of the greatest services."

the same Bessarabia that was to be kidnapped for the third time in 1940, then again in 1944!*

The school was also reproached for infecting children with Christian mysticism, causing religious fanaticism and intolerance; for cultivating superstition in order to keep the people in the dark and thus afford reactionaries the opportunity to oppress the people more easily; and for "deforming history" to create "nationalism." Beginning with the elementary school teachers, and going all the way up to university professors, everything that contributed to the education of youth was "corrupt, sold out, immoral, and opportunistic." The main preoccupation of educators was not quality of education but their own careers, in particular their political careers, and the school was used as a jumping board from which to spring to more interesting and remunerative positions.

Anecdotes were presented as fact, jokes were used as irrefutable argument. If, for instance, a story was told of a teacher "accepting a bribe" from a pupil for promoting him, it was implied that all teachers did the same thing. Those most blamed for "indoctrinating" students were, of course, the university professors. Naturally, explained the

*Bessarabia was part of Moldavia since 1367. In the Sixteenth Century, Moldavia was subjugated by the Turks, who, in 1812, ceded Bessarabia to Russia. Southern Bessarabia was returned to Moldavia under the Treaty of Paris in 1856 and so became part of Romania, which, as has been described in the preceding note, was forced to cede the territory to Russia in 1878. After the Jews destroyed the Russian Empire in 1917-18, Bessarabia first declared itself independent as the Moldavian Republic and then reunited itself to Romania in 1920. The Jews resident in Bessarabia and trained Bolsheviks brought in from the Soviet attempted a revolt in 1924, but without success. In 1940, King Carol, ignoring the protests of the Legionary Movement, of many other patriots, and of his own army, supinely yielded to a Soviet demand and surrendered Bessarabia. The territory was regained by Romania in 1941 and remained a part of the nation until it was occupied by Soviet troops in 1944; it was formally ceded to the Soviet in 1947.

Communists, it was only because of such influential educators that there could possibly be such a large number of students who opposed the Communist Party and showed themselves enemies of the people and of scientific-realist-socialist progress!

The attack on learning opened the way for attacks on the creative elements in art and literature. If the writers did not reflect "social reality" in their works, it was because their education had detached them from the real problems that had to be dealt with in literature. If poetry was symbolic, or folkish, or philosophical, the school was responsible for this also. If a great part of novelists' creations had a nationalistic character, that proved the guilt of their teachers. Not even Eminescu,* whose memory the Communists did not dare to denigrate publicly, was exempt from such criticism.

History also came under attack, especially that covering the monarchial period. The O.D.C.C. had high on its list for destruction all sentiment of loyalty to the monarchy. Of course, really damaging material was not lacking — the scandals of Carol II, his ten years of embezzlement of public funds, the murder of Codreanu and other officers of the Legion in prison, or the massacre *en masse* of Codreanu's followers throughout the country on one night in 1939.† The Communists did not think it important to men-

*Mihail (Michael) Eminescu, who was born in 1850 and died in 1889, has been compared to Byron, Heine, and Leopardi, and is generally regarded as the greatest of all Romanian poets. In his biography of Eminescu, Professor Miron Cristo-Loveanu says of him, "He unites and embodies the whole intellectual genius of his country." An English translation of some of his poems was published at London in 1930. The almost universal veneration accorded Eminescu by the Romanian people made it impolitic for the Bolsheviks to denigrate his memory openly.

†See *Cronologie Legionara*, Munich, 1953, p. 182, which records for the night of Sept. 21-22, 1939, the murder of 252 Legionaries throughout the country, a few from each county plus others from three detention camps and a military hospital. (*Tr.*)

tion that before Carol Romania had two highly respected and beloved kings; Carol's character and crimes were attributed to both. To further undermine loyalist sentiment, specious arguments were cited from Communist history to the glorification of Stalin.

Up to this point, the trials which the student had to undergo following his outer unmasking (physical torture in particular), were somehow relatively impersonal, external forces, even when they touched on faith. But now came the most painful phase of all, and the decisive blow.

The student had to renounce his own family, reviling them in such foul and hideous terms that it would be next to impossible ever to return to natural feelings toward them again.

Although the most beautiful pages ever written have been in praise of a mother, at Pitesti the most offensive of words were uttered to degrade her name. The prime character which a student had to attribute to his mother during his unmasking was that of a prostitute; and since only a moral prostitute could give birth to a moral monster, all students before their unmaskings were, naturally, moral monsters. I shall give here, almost in his very words, the forced statement of a student, which he, with agony of the spirit, repeated for me more than two years after the frightful scene in a main-floor cell of the Pitesti prison, where the "unmasking of his family" took place.

"I am the son of a fairly rich family in — —. Of course the wealth amassed by my father is the fruit of embezzlement while he worked as a purchasing agent for the government. Having so much money at our disposal, we lived quite independent of one another, more so than you would imagine. My father, for instance, met a young woman

who was married to a fellow government worker; he lived with her almost openly, sleeping at her place almost every night. Although he left the greater part of his earnings there, my mother did not object. On the contrary, she took advantage of the situation to find a friend for herself — no other than my father's close associate. This was no secret to any of us, for before they retired alone, oftimes they kissed in front of us and my father left them in peace, for he needed the freedom this afforded him to spend with his girl friend. My mother's friend had a daughter of about my age whom I knew better after my mother entered into intimate relations with him; she also came to see us often. Encouraged by both my mother and her father, I courted the girl and she did not repulse me; on the contrary, she seemed to expect my advances. The same relationship developed between us as existed between my mother and her father, who both encouraged us in our sexual relations; they said it was only in this way that I could overcome my social inhibitions. Once engaged in this sort of life, I introduced a student friend of mine to my sister, and I started inviting him over more often. After a while, there was no need for my invitations, for my sister brought him over herself, developing a relationship with him similar to that of the others in our circle. As a matter of fact, influenced by what she saw at home, she asked me to find her a friend of mine who was more 'virile.' Oftentimes in our home orgies took place in which we all participated, exchanging roles and intermixing promiscuously in the dark." I cannot bring myself to put down on paper the rest of the "testimony" he had to give at the orders of Turcanu.

When I asked him to try to explain to me why he said these things, he answered unhesitatingly, but with pain born of grief, that the only motivation was hope that it

would mitigate his physical and moral suffering "in that hell."

The father was likewise subjected to ridicule and opprobrium. The son's degree of guilt was measured by the status, attitude, and the family from which the father came. Peasant parents were no exception; they had to be portrayed in most despicable terms so the son would be shown to have inherited the character and personality of the one responsible for his physical and moral existence.

The father's shortcomings were determined by his occupation. If he was a simple peasant, then he must have been the servant of the "boyar," his informer, the denouncer of the other peasants who opposed exploitation. If he was a merchant, then he must have cheated on weight, selling cheap merchandise at high prices, failing to pay the clerks and laborers, beating them when they demanded their rights, or threatening to denounce them for Communist activity. If a teacher, he "falsified history," persecuted workingmen's sons, promoted students for bribes, made use of students as laborers in raising his cattle or in gardening, or making them work hard in difficult chores at his home so they could not study properly and were thus unable to compete with the sons of the wealthy. If he was a magistrate, he had sold justice for money and condemned workers to heavy sentences on false charges in order to suppress any social aspirations they might have had. When he presided at political trials, he was in league with the police and assisted in condemning unjustly at least several Communists. (The number of active Communists in all Romania had been only 822, according to the Party Secretary himself, Gheorghe Georghiu-Dej!) Students whose parents were army officers were given special attention. The slanders contained in Zaharia Stancu's novel *Barefoot* or

Eusebiu Camilar's *The Mist,* were almost pathologically exaggerated in order to demonstrate the guilt of "the military in oppressing the working class and provoking war against the Soviet Union."

Among students undergoing unmasking, there were a few, a little older than the others, who came from the ranks of the military. Having been purged from the army when the Russians occupied Romania and having no other means of livelihood, the more courageous went to college to prepare themselves for another profession. In their unmaskings they were forced to relate fabricated events so dreadful that they could scarcely have been envisioned by the imagination of a sick man. The artillery captain Coriolan Coifan, now an engineering student fallen under the bludgeon of the re-educators, told of orgies that took place on the Eastern Front, unimaginable pillaging, numberless assassinations, fantastic rapes, wanton arson of workers' homes merely for the sadistic pleasure of seeing fires, and executions of women and children who were guiltless except of having been convinced Communists, "Stalin's children."

Blaming parents for their children's faults, they tried to establish a "family culpability" complex to convince the student that he was but a victim of his elders, and thus hasten his breakdown. Here is an example to show how far they went:

When the political prisoners were sent to the Canal for work, their free relatives were permitted to visit them and bring packages of food and clothing, for that supplied by the administration was inadequate. A former military man named Dorneanu, who as a youth had joined the cadres of the Legionary Movement where he received an education that was staunchly Christian, patriotic and anti-

Communist, received his mother on her first visit to the Canal with the following greeting: "Get out of here, you whore; it is because of the upbringing I received at home that I am now at the Canal. I do not want to see you again. I have no mother!"

Another student who had passed through Pitesti, Enachescu, derived a special pleasure, while at the Canal, whither he was sent following the unmaskings, in torturing his uncle, Pitigoi, a former National Peasant Party congressman, now himself also a slave-laborer. This the nephew did simply to demonstrate to the camp's administration that he definitively had broken with his family and the reactionary bourgeois way of thinking. The misfortune of the poor ex-congressman was thus all the worse for having been put in the brigade whose boss happened to be his re-educated nephew!

The degree of guilt ascribed to a parent was also determined by the "banditism" of which his imprisoned son was accused. The greater the contempt in which a student was held by the re-educators, the more he had to insult his parents, accusing them of heinous sins. The accusations had to be justified with "irrefutable" proofs, which oftentimes were so absurd as to have caused laughter anywhere but at Pitesti. Here is "the story about my father" as told by a high-school student who at the time of the unmaskings was no more than fifteen years old. It was told me by the boy himself in the prison at Gherla in July 1953.

"My father," he had said, "had a flour mill in X village in Muntenia; several peasants from neighboring villages worked at the mill, but none remained very long because my father replaced them frequently when they protested his failure to pay the wages agreed upon. In order to avoid being sued, he never signed contracts with them. He

fed them from our leftovers, and mush from cornmeal like that used to feed hogs, which he raised nearby. They had to sleep in a stable, without any covering and on a thin layer of straw; worked 16-hour shifts with no rest other than the noon meal eaten in the mill at their working places. The work was very hard, consisting of unloading sacks, carrying them up to the hopper, and then loading the flour into freight cars or wagons. If father thought they were not working hard enough, he reduced the small wages they received; and if they protested, he beat them. When a worker threatened to sue him, he beat him unmercifully and denounced him to the gendarmes, accusing him of spreading Communist propaganda. The worker would be arrested and taken away. My father systematically cheated the peasants who brought in their grain to be milled. In order to get away with this, he made certain of the complicity of an older mill-hand by giving him his share of the 'profits.' Scales were so rigged that when weighing in the grain, they showed less, and when weighing flour out, they showed more, than the actual amount in the sacks. When an unusual amount of flour was stolen, sand was substituted to make up for the lost weight. Peasants knew they were being cheated, but could not oppose him, for he was on excellent terms with the mayor and other authorities, who refused to permit operation of any but my father's mill in the village. Part of what my father stole went to the mayor and part to the gendarme chief; so if anyone complained, the matter went no further than the gendarmerie of the village. Because I was his only son and the heir to the mill, father began introducing me to the secrets of his occupation. He showed me how to rig the scale so it would read falsely, how to add sand to the flour, how to cheat in the process of drying grain to account for the moisture loss."

After the boy related to me the story of his unmasking, I asked him how he could have fabricated such a story, for he said his father was guilty of none of the accusations he had invented.

"From the moment I realized I could no longer resist," he answered, "and that I too would have to tell about my father in the 'unmasking of the family's weaknesses,' as the committee head in our room was proud to say, it was quite simple. You see, during my childhood I often went to the mill. In the evenings an old miller, whom I liked, told me stories, among them that of Prince Charming and the Giant. I learned from these stories how the Giant always tortured those he caught and put them to work in his mills; how he fed them and how he beat them. Thus it was quite easy for me to substitute my father for the bad giant, and tell the story as if it happened at our mill.

"As for the 'political' slant, namely, that about denouncing his workers as Communists, or his arrangement with the gendarmes, I knew this before my arrest from the propaganda spread in villages by the agitators against the 'well-to-do,' the opponents of collectivization. The interesting part of it all is that in the same room with me were others who knew my father. None of them, not one, questioned my story. On the contrary, they affirmed that they knew these details, for their parents were among those cheated by my father.

"Every one of us knew we were all lying. But if by lying we could escape torture, then lie we would! If someone dared say I was lying, he would not have had the freedom to denigrate his own parents, for either I or someone else would have unmasked *his* lie. Even when one fellow who knew my family became head of the committee

and I related — at his request — more lies, he dared not interrupt me. Because when he made his unmasking, I was present and I heard everything he told about his parents — lies likewise. Thus we stuck together in lies and destroyed our souls only because we wanted to save our bodies."

Each "confession" was "evaluated" by the re-education committee, whose members were now inflicting on others what they themselves had suffered a few months before, and were furthermore stimulated by a maddening fear lest they be condemned to pass through another unmasking, for any suspicion that they had been lenient in accepting a "confession" made too easily or without the maximum debasement of the person making it would be considered a grave relapse from their own state of "purification" and punished accordingly. When the committee was at last satisfied that the victim had done all that he could to defile his parents and himself with the vilest calumnies, to the truth of which he in his wretchedness would frantically swear, they judged him ready for the next lesson.

The victim was now stimulated to revile and defame with repeated and invented lies the teachers and writers under whose influence he had matured, and especially the political thinkers and leaders whom he had revered and followed.

Particular care was taken to befoul the reputation and character of three men of national prominence, two of whom were still alive, incarcerated in Communist prisons in which they would soon die, while the third, whose name the Communists most feared and hated, had at that time been dead for more than a decade. The three were: George Bratianu, who had been the head of the Liberal Dissident Party and was highly esteemed for patriotism and fore-

sight;* Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the National Peasant Party, on whom, in the time between the Russian occupation and his imprisonment, had been centered the hopes of all Romanians for eventual liberation from the Communists;† and Corneliu Z. Codreanu, the educator of an entire generation of young men, to whom, after he was murdered in 1938, his spirit was ever present: he still lives in the heart and soul of all whom he inspired by his teaching and example.‡

Each student, as part of his unmasking, had to give "lectures" in the most opprobrious and filthy terms about the men whom he had most venerated, accusing them of every conceivable vice and crime. Since the students were young and had only imperfect recollections of Romanian political history before their own experience began, the

*He was especially known and respected for his strenuous efforts to prevent King Carol's capitulation to Soviet threats in 1940. He is not to be confused with his relative, Dino (Dinu) Bratianu, head of the Liberal Party, who promoted the treason that ended in unconditional surrender to the Soviet in 1944; he, too, died in a Communist prison. On the political history of Romania and the character of the men who were prominent in it, for good or evil, see Prince Sturdza's *The Suicide of Europe* (cf. p. xxxv above).

†During the first years of the Soviet occupation, the young king was kept on the throne as a useful figurehead and there was a pretense that the occupation was temporary. Maniu was permitted to maintain an attitude of independence, and he was widely believed in Romania to have influence with the government of the United States, which, they fondly imagined, favored "democracy" and "self-determination of peoples," as stated in the propaganda disseminated from Washington. Maniu himself may have entertained such illusions; he was elected to the Romanian Senate, arrested, given a theatrical imitation of a trial, and sentenced to imprisonment for twenty-five years. On Maniu's character and career, see the work by Prince Sturdza cited above.

‡On Codreanu, see above, p. xxxi, and the work by Prince Sturdza, in which his career and the activity of the Legion in the climacteric years of Romania's history are recounted in detail. The original text of Prince Sturdza's book contains some fine appreciations of Codreanu that are omitted in the heavily censored translation, but enough remains to illustrate the greatness of the man. (*Tr.*)

"lectures" were often ludicrous, containing accusations that were chronologically impossible or politically preposterous, based on a confusion of one man with another or of one event with another that happened years before or later.

Since Codreanu, the founder of the Legion, had had a moral and spiritual influence that transcended his political leadership and endured, undiminished, after his death, and since the elite among the students had dedicated themselves to the principles and ideals of the Legion, all the old slanders that had been contrived by the leftist and crypto-Communist press in his lifetime were endlessly repeated and, if possible, improved upon, and his living followers who had taken refuge in the West were similarly traduced and "presented in their true light."†

In this unmasking, of course, everyone lied with a straight face and without the slightest trace of embarrassment. The lying not only served the purpose of Communist propaganda by heaping filth on the men who represented everything that was great and true in the culture and history of the nation, leaving in the mind a void that would be filled by Soviet "internationalism," but, more important for the purposes of the experiment, it made the victim habitually and almost automatically subordinate truth to the most monstrous and absurd falsehood. The victim, now accustomed to sinking ever deeper into the quagmire by a kind of conditioned reflex, and conscious that he is destroying himself, despises and hates himself for his submission to what he cannot resist. He has thus been made ready for the final disintegration of himself: his "autobiography."

†One must remember that the young Legionaries who vilified Codreanu in their "unmasking" venerated him as the father of their highest ideals, so that their "lectures" were for them much more than lying defamation of a great man and made them guilty of an ultimate blasphemy. (*Tr.*)

CHAPTER XI

THE DESTRUCTION OF PERSONALITY — "THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY"

The tactic adopted by the technicians who managed the unmaskings from the outside was to liquidate the opposition from periphery to center; in other words, to begin with the victim's beliefs that were external to his ego and to proceed by calculated stages to the destruction of the inner man. When the student had "proved by deeds" that he had repudiated everything that had theretofore constituted his world and thought, he was made to repudiate himself by defaming himself. He had to compose an "autobiography" that proved that he had been brought to his present predicament by a "lack of inner character," and moral perversity and mental sickness that had made him unreceptive to Communism.

He had to begin his autobiography from the moment of his earliest recollections. The predominant theme had to be a negative one, and expressed in superlatives. Vices and deficiencies had to appear in his early years so that his faulty upbringing would form part of a consistent pattern. Contact with the outside world began in his elementary school, where every student must have been taught to steal, and to despise those poorer than himself, so that he would create for himself a superiority complex — a complex that later would make him susceptible to the reactionary doctrines of the idealist-bourgeois criminals. Attending secondary school, he had necessarily to deepen his perversity and develop his egocentrism, love of money,

and ambition to achieve social status rapidly by ambiguous means, the first of which was to incriminate others in order to court the good will of the professors, the possessors of "power."

The educators, of course, were engaged in an illicit traffic in influence, granting special favors to students whose parents returned the favor by augmenting the social position of teachers. The rotten environment in which the student was reared also had to lead him necessarily into frequenting establishments which were "officially" off-limits to all students, but which actually were open to those with the money to pay but closed to sons of workers or the poor.

The literature one read in school (and the students had to cite specific books) could not be anything but a police novel, pornographic literature, the tendentious novel written to aggravate the feeling of hatred toward workers and defenders of the proletarian class. Lastly, movies of the gangster type had to be mentioned, or of frivolous adventure, or films playing up banditry, the heroes of which became idols and models of these students.

Naturally, the result of such an environment led one into the kind of politics natural to Romanian life between the two wars, namely (as characterized by the Communists) one of dishonor, corruption, thievery, blackmail and political assassination. One also developed a disdain toward inferiors, and exercised flattery toward superiors, with the sole aim that of climbing socially. The principal purpose was to become wealthy through exploitation of the working class.

Now, in order to illustrate for his listeners as graphically as possible the moral decadence of his background, the student had to attribute to himself all the possible sins of

that environment and claim he had committed them, including all imaginable perversions. His character included without exception all the deformed aspects of man, everything psychopathology considers abnormal. Whoever would not recognize every sin and vice as his own only proved he was not yet permeated with the true meaning of "unmasking," and those in charge of his "re-education" missed no opportunity to remind him of this with their bludgeons.

Finally, he saw the only thing to do was admit those vices were in him and tell about them in detail. Pederasty, incest, masturbation, every depravity a student had read about or heard of as practiced anywhere on earth, all were described by him as his own actions, bestiality (intercourse with animals) not being excluded. In this way the student was forced to wallow in a quagmire of filth to its very dregs, as if some Satanic force had assumed mastery over him, ordering him to burden his soul with everything which had in the past roused in him the profoundest revulsion.

This imposition of self-degradation became a sort of psychic hysteria that at a given moment seemed to fuse the re-educator's command with a desire for self-destruction in the re-educated. By injecting gradually into the victim's subconscious information different from what he had always accepted as real and true, by altering and constantly deprecating existing reality and substituting for it a fictitious image, the re-educator at last achieved the final purpose of the unmasking: to make the lie so real to the victim that he would forget what had formerly for him made sense. His chaotic mental state and the unreal coordinates along which his consciousness moved throughout the months of torture turned lies into truth and truth into lies, much as the body gradually accustoms itself to narcotic poisons and develops a dependence on them.

As long as his nervous system responded to only rational commands, the student could maintain a normal line of behavior. But the moment fear altered this subordination, his nervous system became his mind's greatest enemy. Any kind of reaction was possible when the entire organism was set quivering, as if touched by fire, by the appearance of the bludgeon, an instrument which attained apocalyptic proportions in the tormented memory of the sufferer. And if natural reticence and dignity endeavored still to hide something in his inner self, his nervous system betrayed him unequivocally. It was at this moment the fusion took place, the hoped-for result of all the planning by the experimenters: the complete reversal, for an indeterminate time, of the values in which the student had always believed.

From then on for an indefinite period, the student would see the world as a god with two faces; the first, which he had thought was real was now become unreal; the second, fantastic and ugly beyond any previous imaginings, now had become real, obsessively and painstakingly so, even though deep down within him a stifled warning might still question its authenticity. And the impossible and the absurd, gradually taking on the semblance of actuality in his consciousness, became the sole standard of value in the student's thinking. The artificial reality step by step displaced every trace of truth from previously verified fact.

But who can fathom the bottomless depths of man's soul? Who knows but that the life of one's past, stubbornly resisting annihilation, may not take refuge somewhere in the depths of the subconscious, while the lie, becoming more and more dominant as truth is denied, invades the entire consciousness of the individual, who finally accepts it as a biological necessity for survival? Whatever the

answer to this question, all the students who revealed their drama to me said that even when they believed the lies, they could still feel a vague anxiety, a sort of warning from the subconscious that disturbed the smooth functioning of the new order, like a ghostly intimation that *something* was not in its proper place.* It may be that the ego, man's inner self, though subordinated by the biological laws of self-preservation and displaced by an alien consciousness, may encyst itself down deep, to remain dormant until outside conditions change and the enclosing cyst is dissolved by returning normalcy.

So long as the danger persisted, however, the artificially induced consciousness was supreme, and any suggestion of doubt that might come from the subconscious was blocked by fear of physical suffering. Fear, deception and pain pushed to the maximum, become allies in psychopathic states, and make man his own enemy, making him frantically repress and strangle his own mind and soul to keep his tormented body alive.

When the victim had become a "new man" and mentally healthy by Communist standards, he had to give proof of his regeneration. It was not sufficient to invent the foulest lies about one's dearest friends; it was necessary to demonstrate one's rehabilitation by physical action, by striking every friend who could be brought before one. As the unmasking progressed, the punishments became increasingly harsh as a constant reminder that there was no escape. The victim had, of course, disclosed in the first stage the names of all his friends, both those with whom his friendship dated from his childhood and student days

*It should be remembered that the author, naturally, was able to interview only persons who recovered from the "unmasking" far enough, at least, to be willing and able to describe their experience. (*Tr.*)

and those whom he had come to know and like in prison. Every one of these individuals then within the walls of the prison was brought in for his unmasking, and he was required to strike each of them in the face and in turn be struck by them.

By such re-education through infinite torment and the destruction of his own personality, a man — or rather the physical husk of him animated by an alien consciousness — was eventually graduated to become a teacher in his turn, and to re-educate others. Then he was sent with several re-educated companions into the cells of prisoners newly brought to Pitesti to greet with feigned comradeship his old friends and to form, with consummate hypocrisy, "friendships" with men whom he had not met or known well before; he would thus gain the confidence of all and extract from each of *his* future victims every bit of information that could be used when the time came for their unmasking. Only when he and his companions had learned everything that they could in this way were they allowed to produce hidden cudgels and fall upon the startled and thunder-struck victims to begin their re-education and to preside over their unmasking with a ferocity stimulated by the awareness that if he gave the slightest sign of leniency or pity, he would be charged with having relapsed from his new "purification" and be condemned to pass again through the whole curriculum of re-education and unmasking.

Could anyone escape from that ultimate degradation and dehumanization? No, no one — no one at all, except those who died during tortures, killed by an unskillful blow or by the internal hemorrhages that not infrequently followed kicks in the stomach or abdomen. Let me mention a few of those who escaped in this manner.

Bogdanovici, who had been the friend and even the collaborator of Turcanu in the period of "rehabilitation through conviction," in the next phase died by the boot of Turcanu himself. The diagnosis by the prison infirmary: death by acute dysentery! Actually his "dysentery" was a rupture of the abdominal arteries, for Bogdanovici died eliminating all his blood through his bowels.

Gafencu, a student from Iasi, who had been imprisoned continuously from the time of Antonescu,* and who was regarded as a leader of the "mystics," perished in the same way.

A chemistry student, Cantemir, also from Iasi, absolutely refused to speak evil of anyone in the very first phase of his unmasking, and was murdered in his cell by his overly enthusiastic re-educators and thus spared all that he would have had subsequently to endure.

So far as I was told, about fifteen victims escaped the final stages of unmasking in this way. The re-educators were formally ordered to avoid killing, but when they did kill one of their victims, they were merely warned not to be so careless in the future, and were usually promoted, for the zeal that had caused death was accepted as a proof of their successful "purification" and complete alignment with the new morality. For some reason, the majority of the killers came from the ranks of the "mushroom" resistance organizations that were formed spontaneously soon after the Soviet occupation by small groups of students

*General Ion Antonescu, who became the head of the government formed by the Legionary Movement after the flight of King Carol in September 1940. In January 1941, by an act of consummate treachery, he carried out a *coup d'etat* against his own government and tried to destroy, by mass arrests and executions, the Legion that had put him in power. (He was eventually kidnapped and murdered by the Bolsheviks whose cause he had unwittingly served so well.) Gafencu, therefore, had been in prison almost ten years when death released him. (*Tr.*)

who had previously held themselves aloof from political concerns and ideological commitments. At least two of them felt remorse after murdering a fellow prisoner, and one became violently insane.

An apparent anomaly in the behavior of the inquisitors was their treatment of persons sick with tuberculosis or a comparable disease. They were exempted from beatings, if they agreed to "unmask" without them, and in order to convince them that it was best not to refuse, they were usually brought into cells where violent unmaskings were in progress and forced to witness the suffering of the victims. If they then refused to co-operate in their re-education, they were subjected to the same treatment as the others, but they were all given a chance to escape the prolonged agony of body, and the majority preferred to take it. Of them, only the outer unmasking was required, that is, the one that elicited information useful to the Securitate and the unmaskers.

The demoralizing effect of even this limited unmasking, however, intensified their illness as much as the lack of medicine, adequate food, and wholesome air. Since persons suffering from consumptive diseases were not likely to be useful to the experimenters, not much emphasis was placed on their re-education. It was easier just to let them die slowly, consumed by disease and despair.

Every student who passed through the re-education had his own story and his own burden of guilt. The most singular aspect of the Pitesti experiment was its uniform success in converting the victim into a persecutor and tormentor of other victims, and this result poses for us one of the most difficult and unusual ethico-psychological problems. If we are to understand it, we must study the techniques of re-education in greater detail.

CHAPTER XII

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

It would be untrue to say that the unmaskings came upon the students all of a sudden and without warning. There were indications of what was to come, none of which foretold just what would happen, but which psychologically laid the groundwork by weakening resistance and creating apprehension. In this preparatory stage, the role played by the prison administration was of the utmost importance. Well ahead of the time that the trained shock groups were introduced into the experiment, the suggestive method was used by guards or by director Dumitrescu himself. The students were led to believe that something monstrous was happening, something was hanging over their heads that none could escape because it was inevitable.

All students knew that "something" was going on; even though the rooms in which unmaskings were gradually taking place were isolated from the prisoners' cells, stifled screams, groans and shrieks could occasionally be heard. Nobody could learn whence they came; no one could find out what was happening. Little by little, the conviction grew within each student that eventually his turn would come. This waiting, this nerve-wracking uncertainty, was deliberately induced on orders of the political director.

Sergeant Georgescu, an exemplar of unmatched brutality among the guards at Pitesti, took care, every time he had the opportunity, to give the prisoners grounds for anxiety.

"You bandit, I beat you, but I also feed you. But just you wait, and see what is in store for you after while . . ."

And he would point in the direction from which the groans could be heard. All this contributed to increased tensions, of course, and is well summed up by the following account by a student who was among the first to undergo unmaskings in the series that began on Dec. 6, 1949:

"We expected the outbreak while under a dramatic tension. We had no fear in the usual sense for we knew we could expect anything from the Communists even before we were brought to Pitesti. Most of us in my cell were prepared to go through any kind of suffering; we were so sure we would not break down! But, still, we were fearful, with a strange uneasiness. We did not know just how they would do it; we could not guess the day it would all start, or who the torturers would be. And then it seemed that we wished, were even impatient, to go through the coming trial, whatever it might be.

"The climax came, however, when we least expected it, and what was more tragic, from those we least suspected capable of such treachery."

The tactic of prolonged anxiety followed by total surprise and the shock of what could not have been anticipated or imagined was always used, and it never failed.

There was another psychological factor that prepared the destined victims for what was to happen. The great majority of them were oppressed by an unexplainable sense of resignation that seemed to create a climate for accepting any kind of torture as a sort of deserved punishment for some imaginary sin. Not one among the students who talked to me about this could identify the source of that feeling. One, who had a thorough medical training, attributed it to physical weakness from insufficient food combined with a subconscious conviction that resistance

was doomed to failure from the start. Without their realizing it, the students were going through a kind of transition from the world they had known into one in which life itself was of minimal importance, an expendable accessory.

The final element was the shock of utter surprise when the victims found themselves in the midst of their unmaskers at the critical moment when the attack was suddenly unleashed. The unbelievable shock probably created in them a state of quasi-hypnosis.

CHAPTER XIII

VERIFYING THE METHOD

The length of time it took a student to become "rehabilitated" varied from case to case. There were some, though these were the fewest, who gave in after only a few days. Others resisted three or four weeks. But for the most of them it required two or three, or even four months.

Once the student had passed through the whole unmasking, he became a docile, pathologically fearful creature, willing and even eager to carry out the most fantastic orders. To verify the degree of his re-education, he was sent, flanked, naturally, by someone a little more "verified," to participate in the unmaskings of former colleagues in other cells. What tortures he had undergone he now must apply to others in order to demonstrate "by deeds" that he had indeed broken with the past.

Not everyone among the re-educated was charged at once with the re-education of others. In order to qualify as a "pedagogue," the student had to meet certain conditions. The students who were eventually to direct the re-education of others were chosen at the start of the unmaskings, and were slated to work on fellow members of their own category* when the time came. But those whose past was too strongly anti-Communist, were denied the privilege of becoming teachers even after they had completed their pedagogic training. Turcanu would give them the following explanation:

*See above, p. 29f.

"I know my merchandise; the bandit within you will never be cured. You are encysted within yourself and only pretend to be re-educated; but in your subconscious you await the moment when you can go back to what I took you away from. You will never be able to rid yourselves of the sinful concepts that poisoned your soul. In spite of what you now appear to profess, you still believe in that other, maybe contrary to your will..."

Although this statement later proved to be correct in many cases, it was designed to excite craving for the office of pedagogue; for paradoxically, it was from the most ardently anti-Communist students that Turcanu eventually chose the "pedagogues" who turned out to be the most cruel of all the enforcers of the unmaskings. True, the majority of them are no longer alive, some having died in later years as a result of injuries or maladies contracted during their own unmaskings, some having been shot when their existence became inconvenient and they were no longer useful. Here are some examples:

A long time after unmaskings were dropped from the prison routine, as I was walking one day toward the washroom with a whole group of detainees in Gherla prison, I noticed on the body of a youth ahead of me red, hideous scars like vertical furrows, up and down his back. I asked a student whom I had known earlier whether he knew the cause of that strange deformation. He replied: "That is Cornel Pop, who was a fifth-year student in medicine at Cluj. The marks on his back were left by unmaskings. He was among those pressed the hardest, for he was one of the main hopes of the group of which he was a member." The speaker's face was convulsed with sadness mixed with fear. Even though he was a run-of-the-mill prisoner, any reference to Pitesti made him tremble. Cornel Pop was

considered in Gherla prison as one of the most dangerous spies and denouncers used by the director, Goiciu, especially among prisoners of Macedonian origin; for Pop had had a particular fondness for them before his arrest, and had formed friendships which he now exploited for the benefit of the Communists. The re-educators had completely converted him. First a victim and then one of the most savage of sadists, his usefulness was eventually exhausted, and he was shot after a mock trial before a Communist military tribunal.

Similarly infamous for their complete conversion and zeal as re-educators were:

Constantin Juberian, also from Cluj; law student; shared the same fate as Pop, after same trial;

Nuti (Ion?) Patrascanu, from Constanta; student in medicine at Bucharest; either disappeared or still in prison;

Ion Bucoveanu, from Bucharest; fifth-year student in construction engineering; freed;

Coriolan Coifan, from Turnu-Severin; former artillery officer, later student in construction engineering; famed for the vigor and accurate aim of the kicks in the stomach he administered to his pupils;

Eugen Magirescu, student in education at Iasi; perhaps one of the most tortured of students during unmasking; today probably dead.

Diaca, student in medicine at Iasi; in the habit of boasting that he was criminal by nature, but actually very much occupied with problems of higher mathematics; often imputed to himself the commission of crimes, maybe real, maybe invented. He did beat many prisoners so badly that they urinated blood; freed, he later was arrested anew and sentenced to 25 years.

Hentes, a high school student from Targu-Mures who underwent his unmasking at Gherla; together with Ludovick Reck, former secretary of the Communist Youth in Transylvania and an agent of the Securitate during the Antonescu regime, he killed the former Socialist congressman Flueras in June 1953 in a ground-floor cell of the Gherla prison by beating him with sacks filled with sand. Flueras was about 70 years old.

Florin Popescu, from Pitesti, who specialized in torturing the floor sweepers, whom he forced to kneel on walnut shells, or, lacking these, on sharp grains of sand, whenever it seemed to him that the floors weren't scrubbed well enough.

This transformation into torturers seems explicable in the case of those who had no clearly defined attitudes at the time of their arrest, and who quickly gave in during unmaskings; but what can explain such a total change in those who at first most tenaciously resisted? To what can be attributed their obvious malice and malignancy after they took charge of unmasking others, especially if they had not been made chairman of an unmasking committee or even accepted into the O.D.C.C.?

CHAPTER XIV

"PROFITABLE" USE OF TIME

The relationship of "unmasked" students to the "patron" O.D.C.C. is not clear. Not everyone considered re-educated became a member of O.D.C.C. as a matter of course; in fact, only a very small number were chosen by Turcanu and approved by his unseen superiors. The exact number of those considering themselves members could not be learned. Supposedly it did not exceed 50 or 60 out of a total of more than 1,000 re-educated students. It was from these approved "joiners" that committee leaders were selected to direct unmaskings.

As the number of re-educated grew, using all of them in unmaskings became of course more difficult. Everything possible was done to ensure that each participated in at least one such operation, in order to confirm his disintegration into the new state. There were, on the other hand, always the zealots who carried the load, and were taken from cell to cell to begin their work anew.

The rest of the re-educated students passed their days according to the established program. Usually the program came from "above," namely from the directorate of the O.D.C.C., but many times it was left to the discretion of cell committees, the leadership being confident that its underlings understood very well what was permitted and what was not.

Topics for discussion, once selected, were often assigned to a student to confirm his degradation, but there were

plenty of volunteers who offered to speak on "agreed upon" subjects out of a desire to put to sleep any suspicions the committee might entertain. In this manner were organized short theatrical productions in which the old order, or organizations of which the "creators" were former members, were maligned. Poetry, and particularly the epigram, was employed in developing the topics selected by the committee. Out of these efforts came a collection of verses, entitled "The Red Notebook," to which several students over a period of three years contributed their work. The student Sergiu Mandinescu, a quite talented youth, had charge of editing the work, which was finally presented to the political officer of the Gherla prison, Avadanei, who, in addition to torturing prisoners, busied himself with being a "patron of the arts." The collection, as was to be expected, contained lavish praise of the Communist Party and its early underground fighters; laudatory poems about machinery in factories; and odes on the creative nature of prison life which "forged new men."

Educational discussions were held based on materials prepared by the prison's directorate and by O.D.C.C. members. In these, plans of action for further unmaskings were worked out and various reports of "in the field" leaders of unmaskings were analyzed. During these "analysis meetings" were scrutinized also the written declarations of those subjected to torture, especially those concerning the outer unmasking; if found adequate, they were sent every month to the Ministry of the Interior by special courier.

The fulfillment of this program was supervised by members of the O.D.C.C., a watchful eye being particularly kept on things which might prove symbolic, resulting sometimes in quite preposterous situations. Here is an example:

One afternoon a student began humming a popular tune of the 1940's. From the whole song, I here give only the refrain:

> "But I cannot, and slowly pass the years
> Waiting for the buckeyes to bloom again..."

Just a few common words. But back in 1947 the Romanians had modified the last line, substituting "Waiting for the Americans to arrive." Doubtless our music lover was only humming a tune without thought for the substituted verse, but someone who heard him shouted, "Unmask!" This was the term used to announce you had something to say about yourself or someone else. At once, everybody had to stop what he was doing and listen. "The bandit X sang a song with a hidden meaning; he cannot forget what he was; and he awaits the Americans to take revenge on the re-educators." The student in question, surprised, could not but admit that the bandit within him had not yet disappeared and that he was guilty and deserving of stringent punishment!

Any slackening in attention to "the new nature" was taken care of by controlling the rhythm of the unmaskings. When the effect was at a low ebb, those who were still in their own cells were sent either to other cells where unmaskings were being started, or into cells where the newly arrived were being held. Here they were required to act as "confidence men" and obtain all the information they could from the newcomers, which could be used later when the cudgels were brought out and the re-education began.

CHAPTER XV

AMPLIFICATION OF THE EXPERIMENT

After such preparation and under such pressure, Pavlov's conditioned reflexes worked perfectly.

The students to be used as the "shock group" in cells whose inmates were to undergo unmasking were selected by the committee because, through their previous testimony, they were known to have close friends among the new group and could more easily elicit information to be used a couple of weeks later to intensify the effect of surprise at the moment of unleashing the unmasking. Following this dramatic moment of shock, Turcanu would appear, raise his cap, deliver his discourse, and at a signal, set off the lightning barrage of bludgeons on the thunderstruck victims.

One cycle was closed, a new one opened. Those who had been tortured were now torturing those who in their turn were being trained to torture others. This rhythm increased as the number of trainees increased, and the experiment was extended from Pitesti to other Romanian prisons.

By the time the amplification was decided upon, the Ministry of the Interior was already sending political prisoners to the slave labor camps to be worked to death in digging a navigable canal that would connect the Danube to the Black Sea. The contribution that students could make to this extermination process looked promising. The December 1949 cycle of mass unmaskings did not provide enough

robots to satisfy the demands of the canal administration. This was mainly because Pitesti had to retain the old trainers to unmask the increasing numbers being sent there from military tribunals all over the country. The tempo of the unmaskings was therefore stepped up rapidly to satisfy the increased demands at the canal. But also, the process itself was being speeded up, as the directors found they could skip the two weeks of psychological preconditioning usually given the trainees before the unmasking was initiated. Better results were obtained, they found, by plunging the victims directly into unmasking, thus preventing information from the outside being circulated inside their cell. So when a new group of students arrived, it was sent directly into unmaskings the moment after it was duly registered on the administration's books.

The group of students transported from Cluj, mostly from the Law School, may be cited as an example. They were unloaded into the prison early in July 1950, among them several students whom I met later — Inocentiu Glodeanu, Silviu Suciu, Hosu, Pitea, and others. They were taken to Hospital Room Four, not given any time to rest, or even for the "shock group" to elicit information; they reacted violently and fought for hours, but finally were overpowered by the much larger number of re-educators who imposed the norm of the new "ethics," employing the usual methods of torture to illustrate its validity. Of the four victims I came to know well, three had sustained permanent damage to their lungs.

Because of this increased tempo of unmaskings, some errors were bound to be made in screening detainees for transport to Pitesti. Thus it happened that several youths who were not even students arrived. One had been an "occasional" student named Opris from the slums of Bucha-

rest, about 20 years old and by occupation a pickpocket. He had been arrested trying to slip across the border — probably because the Romanian people had become so poor that his occupation no longer paid! His infraction was considered political and Opris landed at Jilava, being put in the same cell I used to have, No. 23 in the second section, in the fall of 1949. Here, he represented himself as a congressman's son implicated in an anti-Communist organization, but actually he was busy supplying information to Director Maromet. He was tried, then sent to serve his sentence at Pitesti among the students. He went through the usual unmaskings, but what was he to tell? He "unmasked" his real occupation in the first session, even before being beaten. So he was compelled to demonstrate how he plied his trade, being presented as a "victim of bourgeois education."

Strange also was the inclusion of lawyer D. among students, for his age precluded a mistake and the Securitate had his complete dossier anyway. He was arrested under suspicion of being a member of a resistance group led by Colonel Arsenescu; and he was not brought to trial, but only sentenced to 10 years — for defiance of authority! Perhaps the Securitate sent him to Pitesti hoping to get more information from him via the Pitesti experiment than they had been able to obtain through the extreme rigor of normal investigative methods.

The same thing happened to Eugen Bolfosu, the engineer, who was tried by the Military Tribunal of Bucharest along with a group of students from the Polytechnical School. By some coincidence, I traveled in the same prison van with him from Pitesti to Aiud in the winter of 1951; but even though the trip took two days to cover the couple of hundred miles because, contrary to habit, the van

stopped at various provincial prisons for "pickups", Bolfosu uttered not more than three words the whole time, and these only when questioned. Once arrived at Aiud, he was hastily isolated because he had been brought from Pitesti prison. The political officer visited him several times, but whether or not he said any more than while being transported I do not know. He did appear three days later, but his silence was even more pronounced (if this was possible) three months later when I met him in the workshop.

A high school student from Constanta was also sent to Pitesti by mistake, and his subsequent transfer to Aiud was also strange, as high school students were usually not sent there either. He, like the others from Pitesti, would not speak to anyone about what happened there, even though there was considerable freedom to talk in the workshop in Aiud.

Much later, I found out one reason for such reticence: Turcanu had given instructions to all those transferred from Pitesti to Aiud to get in touch with the political officer at once and tell him anything that might be useful later on in unmaskings of the "old ones" (politicians of the traditional political parties, and older Legionaries) which he himself was scheduled to initiate at Aiud, where he thought he would soon be transferred. He cautioned them that if they talked, they would face a new ordeal of tortures when he arrived.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIRST RESULTS

As was only natural, the capital accumulated from the investment at Pitesti could not remain unutilized. The first Securitate that directly used the "rehabilitated" students in order to squeeze from the arrestees more than could be gotten by the bludgeon, was that of Pitesti. A wing of the prison containing a number of cells was placed at the Securitate's disposal for use with detainees yet untried, usually members of a group that escaped arrest on the first raid; or those whose cases were complicated and would require more time; or those few who still, despite all conventional tortures, had not talked enough and were sent "into storage." The "re-educated" students recommended by Turcanu were put in the cells with these men in the hope that where the Securitate failed they would succeed.

The method usually followed was very simple. The "re-educated" individual introduced into the cell had to show several scars from maltreatment, but was to maintain a prescribed attitude of complete silence, of suspicion toward all the newcomers, and of refusal to discuss anything with them for fear of "being denounced to the Securitate." After a while, when he felt he had by such bearing gained their confidence, he would approach the person he had been ordered to cultivate, carefully advising him as a younger neophyte to stay away from *everyone*, for "you can't tell whether the one you talk to might not be a secret agent of the Securitate." This warning won him the confidence

of his prey when later he gradually inquired into details of the man's case, constantly offering helpful advice as to how he should behave when interrogated. Usually success with the newcomer was certain, especially if he was not a student. Romanians who had not attended a university had traditionally felt great respect for and trust in students over the years, and now, when such a man most needed a confidant, a moral support to help him bear the brutality of his captors more easily, it was the natural thing to lean on this helpful, respected, and better educated student, giving him full confidence. Later, during interrogation, he discovered his error, for the interrogator repeated everything he had told his "adviser" in confidence, but when he was returned to the cell, his confidant was no longer there.

This method of eliciting secrets from newcomers was used extensively at the Ministry of the Interior, where several re-educated students were shifted from cell to cell for a year to act as "advisers" to persons recently arrested. Here are some examples:

The student Caravia was used at the Ministry of the Interior to spy on the group of parachutists led by Alexandru Tanase in 1953. Freed in 1956 for a brief period, he was then re-arrested.

At Iasi, then Barlad, then Hunedoara prisons, a former industrial student named Tudose was evidently a man who got results, for in 1956-57 he was still performing this dirty work for the Communist regime.

At the Brasov-Codlea Securitate, the student Craciunescu from the Faculty of Agronomy was used in 1954. He was in charge of stalking the Legionary group that formed a resistance skeleton in the Fagaras Mountains.

At the Securitate of Constanta, the student Iuliu Anagnostu from the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest was used for over two years, especially with Macedonian students arrested throughout villages in Dobrogea. He was responsible for the arrest of a group of over 25 Macedonians in the Mihai-Viteazul village and in Baschioi, as well as for the arrest of several Turks from around Constanta. He would introduce himself as a Legionary and a doctor, being neither one nor the other. For services rendered, he was allowed to "escape" around 1954, then was sent through villages in northern Dobrogea to perform more services for his masters by posing as a fugitive. Even though he had been sentenced to 15 years in prison, he was permanently liberated in 1956 when his case was reheard, while he was "escaped."

The great plague of denunciations by the re-educated was to cause havoc in the large so-called "penitentiaries of execution" to which were sent condemned political prisoners to serve out the sentences handed down by the Securitate after the flagrantly staged shows called "trials".

CHAPTER XVII

PAUSE FOR ESCALATION?

One day in April 1951, after almost everyone in Pitesti prison had undergone unmaskings, the procedure was abruptly terminated by order. The prison thus assumed the aspect of any of the ten penitentiaries existing in the "Romanian People's Republic" at the time. A new period had begun. Already massive shipments of prisoners were leaving regional penitentiaries, and the large prisons, bound for the slave-labor camp at the canal mentioned above — veritable human herds driven toward a great slaughterhouse.

From among the students, with the exception of the inept and those who were needed for further educational labors, those who were under a sentence of 10 years or less were sent to the canal, where they were promised much. At the same time, new transports of condemned students continued to arrive at Pitesti, among whom were many high school students.

Up to this time, the 15 and 16-year-olds had been isolated at Gherla; now the natural patriotic inclination of the high-schoolers was to be exploited in the foulest possible manner. Some means had to be found, evidently, to destroy their native patriotism with a spectacular and definitive breakdown. Since Communist justice does not condemn on the basis of the infraction committed but according to the presumed potential of the victim in hand, the sentences pronounced against these children, in the majority of cases,

would have dishonored the most inept or corrupt magistrate in a civilized land.

The approach used in this campaign against patriotic adolescent students was serpentine: they were induced to "join" the "Legion of Michael the Archangel." The poor students did this in good faith, thinking they were in fact becoming members of the organization through which Codreanu had educated the youth of Romania in Christian ideals and knightly manhood.

From among the Legionary students who had formerly led the cadres of the F.d.C. ("Brotherhood of the Cross," the Legionary Movement's high-school group), the O.D.C.C. selected those considered completely "re-educated" and ordered them to begin organizing the youths into Legionary groups just as though they were outside prison. No detail of this deception was overlooked. Everything was based on the principles followed when Legionary groups operated underground, and meetings were held "in the strictest secrecy." The high-schoolers responded completely; their adherence and loyalty was warm, sincere, and total. The preparation lasted several months and by the summer of 1951 they were considered ready to be taken to swear allegiance to the Archangel.

Among the first victims of this satanic game were high school students sent to Pitesti from the canal work force for disciplinary reasons. Here is how the student, O.C., forced to "prepare" the high school students, told the story long afterwards:

"One day, into the cell in which we were locked following our unmasking, several young high-school students were introduced in order that we might prepare them according to the order received previously through Turcanu. This

order was categorical: Establish their membership, at any cost, in the Iron Guard (synonymous with "Legionary Movement" and "Legion of Michael the Archangel"), so that 'the greater the height, the deeper and more definitive the fall!' The effect of the unmaskings to come was thus assured.

"I took this assignment with pangs of remorse, even though the human being within us all had been killed. Who could refuse? From the moment the high school student came in, the cell took on the aspect it had before the unmaskings; we acted as though nothing had happened and continued to behave as we had outside the prison in underground activity. The education began according to the rules: take advantage of their inclination toward Christian faith. So we taught them psalms and prayers; we discussed theology, counseled them, taught them how to fast. What seemed more monstrous than the destruction of our own self-respect, was our being made to eat their food when they fasted! This, to demonstrate to the re-education committee that we were really cured of the Christian sickness for good. As for patriotism, we stimulated their natural inclination by teaching them patriotic and Legionary songs, and instructing them in the laws and conduct required of any youth wanting to join the movement.

"When their preparation was considered adequate, they were moved to another cell, where they felt the first hailstorm of the 'unmasking' bludgeons.

"The new victims were passed through unmaskings by others than we who had 'educated' them. The 'educators' were kept in reserve for more difficult moments, should they arise. When, with all the tortures to which he was subjected, a high-school student refused to talk, the head

of the committee, with a diabolical satisfaction, would bring in the one who had 'prepared' him, for a 'confrontation.' It is not hard to imagine the collapse produced in the soul of a boy less than twenty years old when his counselor, his model of honor, courage, and integrity but a few days earlier, turned out to be his betrayer."

My second example is the story told by one who had been one of the young victims. "Even now," he said to me, "after having passed through the unmaskings, and knowing the dirty motive behind this inhuman staging, I cannot yet believe that N., who 'recruited' me into the 'Legionary Movement,' did everything only because it was ordered by the re-education committee. There was something in his teaching other than simply the following of orders — an inner compulsion, perhaps subconscious, but sprung from the soul, that changed everything in moments of truly soulful exaltation. One day, alone in our cell at dusk, a heart-breaking sadness came over his face and he quit talking, his eyes turning away to look through the bars at the twilight hills out there. Many times I asked him to tell me the reason for his sadness but he never would say; when I insisted he would look at me for quite a while, painfully, imploringly, then would turn away and look in another direction. Nearly always, after I questioned him, he would start talking about the new man, the truly Christian man capable of healing wounds not only of the body but of the Romanian soul. There was so much warmth, even passion, and such sincerity in his words, that I am convinced that these moments constituted for him the only means of escape from the infernal cycle into which he had been pushed against his will. And who knows? Maybe he imagined himself really free and that what he said was not intended to destroy a soul but out of pure love to help it. In the toughest moments of the

unmasking, even when he was face to face with me and behaved as ordered on that dirty mission, I could not hate him.

"Later, after the unmaskings, when danger had passed and we could talk more freely, I was the first one to try approaching him and try to establish a friendship I fondly wanted. As he had lost much weight due to the lung trouble he contracted, I offered to share the little food I received, but he refused any help. He even refused to talk to me. I read in his eyes the same heart-breaking pain I saw in the cell at Pitesti whilst he was trying to prepare me to orient myself into a life that would follow the insane drama then unfolding. For two years following this silent encounter he avoided meeting me, although we worked in the same workshop, on the same shift. I believe his anguish was probably much greater than mine. After this, he was isolated, and I do not know if he lives or not or whether he was cured of his infirmity inflicted during the unmaskings. I would give a lot to be able to talk to him just one single time, if only to convince him that in my heart he remained forever as he was in those moments while we were together there in our cell."

Similar accounts were given me by several individuals. Particularly significant, I think, is the fact that almost all high-school students who passed through this unique experience, when given the opportunity to turn around and objectively look at the past, clearly distinguished between the definitely demonic and the humane, Christian and Romanian aspects of that preparatory phase; between the crushed and terrified prisoners who, acting by reflex, cozened and betrayed them, and the profound truth of the lessons they had, for whatever motive, given the victims.

From among the high-school students tortured at Pitesti or Gherla will emerge true personalities matured by suffering, capable of facing the long darkness to which the Romanian people are now subjected. They will be able to sustain, in the inhuman isolation of Communist slavery, the hope of a new generation.

* * * * *

Thus was the cycle completed. The labor of re-education was bearing its fruit. What had happened to all those who, out of the hope of saving their country and perpetuating the concept of free men, had sacrificed everything — absolutely everything? They had been changed into a mass of imbeciles by the fear born out of torture and despair; by the uncontrollable conditioned reflexes that the bludgeon had implanted; by reciprocal hatred; by quivering dread lest at any time, for any reason or none, from any motive, plausible or otherwise, they might have to repeat the unmasking. The personality of each individual had been made to disappear, leaving room for the robot. To speak, to do, to react, to command — it all became simple. Conditioned reflexes appeared at the slightest excitation; external reality was obliterated, forgotten, on command. The only thing that remained and was painfully present in body and soul was the anguish. In order to avoid physical and moral pain, man changed himself feverishly into an animal. What had been moral certainties before the collapse, became odious dangers, an unbearable nightmare from which one must escape at all costs.

That is why one confessed imaginary crimes, in order to spread the ash of forgetfulness over the past, over reality, to complete the dissolution of the self, that could be only the source of inner suffering, and to substitute for the

forgotten past a fictitious one, untrue but pleasing to those who conducted the experiment of "human metamorphosis."

The tendency to falsify, imposed at the beginning by the methods of re-education, becomes later on a kind of necessity in itself. Through a mixing of intelligence with animal reflexes, of the false with the real, of cynicism with obligatory fanaticism, a person finds that he can exist only in a fictitious world where everything has been inverted.

Collective madness becomes reality. All commanded vileness and crime will be pursued in its name — willingly and eagerly pursued. This madness will be sustained, nourished persistently, not haphazardly, but systematically, by a certain logic — paradoxical, but calculated — so that it can be used any time, anywhere it may be found useful by its masters.

That is the triumph of Communist science.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ESCALATION

Spring brought the escalation. The capital of this investment, accumulated with such perseverance over the months, could not be allowed to remain idle. Under the direct supervision of the Ministry of the Interior's representatives, students were screened and graded like so many cattle. Those considered "re-educated" but not capable of carrying out specific missions, were sent to the "work colony" (actually an extermination camp) along the canal that has never been completed to this day. With them were sent students considered definitively "new men" and able to supervise not only the labor but also qualified to control the "output in the area of education." Those not sent to the canal were distributed as follows:

a. The most reliably re-educated were sent to Gherla prison in the north of the country. Their selection reflected indirectly the basis on which they were first separated into categories on arrival at Pitesti and before re-education, according to their respective sentences. Those who had been given the longest sentences, having received the harshest treatment, furnished the largest contingent of the "trusted re-educated" going to Gherla. Others in the shipment were those sentenced to less than ten years. These were not considered sufficiently reliable in themselves but were included so as to be kept under surveillance and eventually put under unmaskings once more — as it turned out, soon after their arrival at Gherla.

b. Students with diseases of the lung were sent to Targu-Ocna prison in the Bacau region, which was reserved for them. It was called a sanatorium but the difference between it and other prisons was in name only. All prisoners with infected or injured lungs were sent there from all the prisons in Romania, but the number sent was controlled, as the authorities' objective was to exterminate, with as little commotion as possible, but completely, as many as they could. In 1951, sick inmates numbered only 1,000; the majority of inmates at this prison were brought there from the re-educated student group to carry out the unmaskings thoroughly and with dispatch, and actually outnumbered their sick victims.

c. Students considered trustworthy but who had not received sentences from a court of law were sent to the Ocnele-Mari prison in northern Oltenia, where many Romanians, who had been arrested in 1948 but had never been tried or even accused, were confined just for having been guilty of holding positions in the so-called bourgeois governments prior to Communist occupation.

The Aiud prison, notorious for its own extermination treatment, was the only one to which no re-educated students were sent, just why is not certain. One reason may have been because it had been, since 1947, the prison to which any condemned person who was at all prominent was sent, and consequently some attention of the West was already focused upon it; sending re-educators to it might have revealed to the West the Communists' unique methods of "re-education." On the other hand, the reason may have been simply that there could not be spared enough re-educators to work over the 3,500 prisoners housed there — it would have taken almost the entire output of reliable and expert re-educated men to do it. But it was rumored among prisoners that Aiud was just being left to the last.

There was, of course, some pretense that this distribution of the students was made on their own initiative and that the Communist Party had no voice in it at all.

In the spring of 1951, long before the closing of Pitesti prison, a secret meeting was held in which only members of the O.D.C.C. participated. It was chaired by Turcanu; no official representatives of the Ministry of the Interior appeared. The "work" performed up to this moment was evaluated. It was established that the "re-education of the students was an accomplished fact and that the results were encouraging;" that through the unmaskings "a great service had been rendered the Party and the working class" because through them had been discovered all the "bandits who were not denounced in the previous investigations," and that all resistance "within the Pitesti prison" was broken.

These statements of Turcanu were followed by "propositions," actually a memorandum drawn up in which the approval of the Ministry of the Interior was requested for expansion of the experiment to all the prisons in Romania, for the re-education of all prisoners!

To what degree the "memorandum" came from the "initiative" of the students is plain, I believe, from this account of the affair by the student S.B.:

"I had just been brought from the room in which I was undergoing the tortures of the outer unmasking, into the cell that served as the O.D.C.C. office. I was to complete and put down on paper some declarations I made the day before and inscribed on my soap plaque. Turcanu and three or four other men were in this room evaluating declarations made by those preceding me. I couldn't make out what they were discussing as they were speaking in such low tones. But suddenly a misunderstanding seemed

to develop, possibly over some statement in a declaration, and the discussion became louder and more heated. One of the men, quite tall, whom I did not know, opposed Turcanu openly, whereupon Turcanu jumped up as one possessed by a boundless fury and attacked him unmercifully with blow upon blow. Not only was this man subsequently removed from the unmasking committee, but he was downgraded to the "bandit" category and subjected again to unmasking. And the beating, the demotion, renewed torture, — all this not because he had failed to declare something, but simply because he had contradicted Turcanu! But then, perhaps he was simply a scapegoat, as it would seem that every now and then a loose-tongued collaborator, however willing, has to be sacrificed to stimulate blind obedience."

If a simple controversy like this, over a remark by a third party, could bring Turcanu to such drastic action, then who would have the temerity to refuse to sign and applaud a memorandum prepared by him? And one important enough that it was to be sent to the Ministry of the Interior!

The contents of this memorandum compared to those of any resolution "adopted" in a "Communist confab" were as alike as two drops of water. First came eulogies of the Party, then a report of results, followed by the classic Communist "constructive propositions" and finally the "pledges" to carry out to a successful conclusion the various labors "for victory of the working class," etc., etc. Rounding off the document like a seal of approval was the series of well-known epithets against imperialists, Fascists, wealthy landowners and all those who plot behind the scenes for the overthrow of the order established with the help of the Soviet Union, *et cetera ad nauseam.*

After reading it aloud, Turcanu had the 40-odd O.D.C.C. members present sign it, then forwarded it, according to the participants, directly to the Ministry of the Interior via the prison's political officer. This "initiative" was so much the more monstrous because the motto: "Their destruction through themselves" was so evident throughout. But since precautionary measures taken by the Communist Party had failed to cover up the phenomenon entirely, the open participation of political officers in producing such documents was necessary, to give the impression of normalcy and official sanction.

Now appeared on the scene, for the first time officially, a superior officer sent direct to Pitesti by the Ministry of the Interior, one Zeller, a colonel from the General Directorate of Penitentiaries. Even though he visited prisons dressed in a military uniform, Zeller was actually only a colonel in the Securitate, and worked directly under the orders of another such, Colonel Dullberger (later Dulgheru) and also General Nicolski, the General Director of the Investigations Service in the Ministry.

One of the many missions entrusted to Colonel Zeller was the supplying of labor hands (i.e. prisoners) to the canal camps. At this time he was empowered to select students "who were fit to leave." As a matter of fact, the majority of students were of the opinion that he should know because they were sure it was Zeller himself who directed the unmaskings, or at least was among those directly responsible for them. Here are some details to support this conviction:

The qualification for being "fit" for canal work was to have undergone unmasking, though officially this was called being "physically fit." Preceding the medical examination — which, by the way, was perfectly inhuman, lacking the

most elementary human decency — Zeller would turn to Turcanu who was seated next to him, and ask, "Does he deserve to go to work?" And on the answer given by Turcanu depended Zeller's decision.

The goings-on in the cells at Pitesti were reported directly to Zeller in a full unmasking session by bloodied students. Likewise, at Gherla, a desperate prisoner, perhaps imagining that a vestige of human feeling yet remained in the heart of a Communist officer, stepped out of line and began to relate with tears in his eyes what he and others in cell 99 on the fourth floor were suffering in the autumn of 1951. Zeller, though he feigned surprise, took no steps whatever.

He personally saw to it that no student left for the canal before having "made his unmasking." Ironically, in 1952, when the Pauker-Tescovici faction was liquidated and the Experiment suspended for the time being, Zeller put a bullet through his own head — in an orthodox cemetery, at that! Sometimes destiny is just: Zeller committed suicide among the dead whose faith he had labored so hard to destroy.

That the regional Securitate of Pitesti knew everything that happened in the prison, is pretty well proven by the testimony of O.C., a student from the Polytechnical School in Bucharest:

"I was arrested in Bucharest several weeks after most of my colleagues had already passed through the Rahova Road [Bucharest's Securitate. *Ed.*] and the Ministry of the Interior investigations. Because the dossiers for the whole group were almost completed, the interrogating officer did not insist too much on details from me. But after declarations were made by those who preceded me

in unmaskings at Pitesti, the Ministry requested a supplementary investigation of me. Since it was considered unnecessary to transport me to Bucharest for the investigation, an officer of the Pitesti Securitate was charged with completing it, and this took several days. It so happened that I had known this officer in my high school days and we were both naturally greatly surprised to confront each other in these circumstances, but since there was another officer with him, he pretended not to know me. But the next day, when the investigation became more or less routine, the officer was unaccompanied by the second one and, miraculously, his tongue loosened.

"At one point, he changed the tenor of the discussion entirely, and asked me somewhat parenthetically about what was going on in the prison. I had not yet made my unmasking and had no suspicion of the horrifying reality of tragedy after tragedy being enacted there, possibly in the very cell next to my own. I had heard shouts and thuds that penetrated the walls somewhat, but did not realize what caused them. Without realizing it, I was being put through the 'waiting period' or psychological preparation of my nervous system — screams and thuds heard later would already have been registered in my nervous system as ordinary happenings. So I told the officer honestly all I knew about the prison up to that time. He stood a moment, thinking. Then he asked me:

" 'What do you know about unmaskings?'

" 'What are those?' I asked in my turn, surprised.

" 'Listen to me well,' answered the lieutenant. 'In your prison some unusual things that have not ever happened before are now taking place. I cannot give you details, but I can advise you as a friend not to resist anything demanded of you, for it is useless and very dangerous.

Make your unmasking, in other words, relate everything you know which you may have neglected to declare in the Securitate's investigation. But to make it still easier for you, I suggest you ask to report to the prison's political officer — he is in a position to advise you better. Tell him you want to unmask yourself but that you do not know how to go about it, and he will help you.'

"I wanted to get more information on this, and asked him to explain further, but it was no use... When I returned to the cell I requested the chief of my section to allow me to report to the political officer.

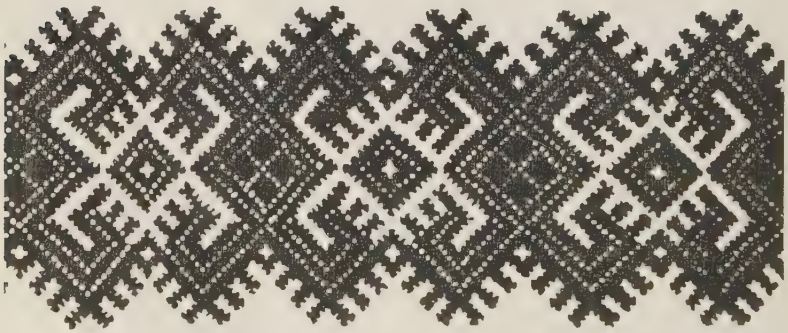
"Now, although I am naturally timid and was still suspicious of the deceptions practiced by the Ministry of the Interior, particularly at the office of the Malmaison [Military Prison in Bucharest] secret police, I somehow never suspected my former schoolmate, the lieutenant, of possible duplicity, and in fact complied with the advice he gave me almost at once without a second thought. My hasty decision I now regret, frankly speaking, only to the extent to which the evil I did to those who came my way after my unmasking was not justified by my own suffering. But the example of those who suffered so much before I did what I had to do is quite eloquent: with or without suffering, I would have ended in the same place.

"As I was saying, I asked to be taken out of my cell to the political officer in order to make my unmasking, though I had no idea what this meant. To my surprise, they came the very next day to take me — to Turcanu!! He was awaiting me in the shower room and expressed surprise at my request, for I was the only one, he said, who had asked permission to make his unmasking without being tortured, without even being asked to make it. He was surly in manner, but seemed to have some good will

toward me, explaining in some detail what was expected of one in unmasking (we were speaking of the outer unmasking only) and especially insisting on my being absolutely sincere, pointing out the consequences of any attempt to deceive.

"As during the Malmaison investigation, I was faced with making some declarations that broke my morale; what I added to them at Pitesti did not carry much weight. I thought that this interview was all there was to unmasking. But upon being taken to another cell and placed in the position of 'assisting,' I was terrified by what I there witnessed. But any resistance was impossible; even if possible it would have been worse than futile. Then followed the catastrophe, my inner unmasking and its consequences . . ."

With the exception of those with tuberculosis, O.C. was the only student I knew who made his unmasking without first passing under the bludgeon. His was in fact a case entirely separate from all others, for much later at Gherla he was to play one of the dirtiest possible roles, long after other students had recovered from their "purification."



CHAPTER XIX

THE EXTENSION INTO OTHER PRISONS (THE FIRST PHASE)

Under the direct supervision of Colonel Zeller, the students from Pitesti were divided into several categories on the basis of the severity of their sentences, their physical condition, and especially their relative trustworthiness.

Those considered unfit for work, the irrecoverable tuberculosis cases, were sent by van to Targu-Ocna prison, ironically called a "sanatorium," where, of course, there were invalids transferred from other prisons. Immediately on arrival all prisoners were subjected to unmaskings, under the direction of Nuti Patrascanu, a medical student from Bucharest. In this case the approach used was different from that of Pitesti. There were no beatings, except when other methods failed. But these methods were much harder on the sick and the infirm. Those chosen to undergo unmaskings were confronted with the following ultimatum: "If you want to get medicine, you have to undergo your unmasking, you bandit!" Anyone refusing to cooperate was faced with confinement in a dark cell, devoid of fresh air, or a reduction to half rations, or both.

"Look, bandit, your health is imprisoned here. If you choose to undergo unmasking, you shall receive the medicine you need, get well, and go home before the end of your sentence. You could see your mother, family, live freely, and continue your education. You must choose between life and death. Only you can decide..." Even

though the value of the medicine was questionable, to the sick it held out a promise of miraculous powers exaggerated in their minds by the fact that they could not get it, and the knowledge later that such medicine was denied them accelerated the progress of their destruction.

This state of affairs caused a dramatic reaction. Virgil Ionescu, a law student from Bucharest, who had partially undergone unmasking in Pitesti, tried to commit suicide by slashing his wrists with a razor blade, in order to end his suffering. He was discovered and bandaged, but only after losing a large amount of blood. This case was reported to the administration, but unmaskings continued nevertheless. The other students went on a hunger strike and warned the director that they would not quit until the prosecutor was brought to the prison, told about what went on, and asked to put an end to the unmaskings; but they were ignored.

One Sunday morning, a soccer game was being played on the sports field near the prison, with a goodly number of civilians watching, among whom were many Securitate officers — part of the force guarding the hydroelectric works being built at nearby Bicaz. Only a narrow strip of land, on which ran a railway line, separated the prison from the soccer field, and when the students noticed the gathering at the stadium, they assembled in the cells facing the game and from the windows began to shout, "We want the prosecutor! We want the prosecutor! They are killing us! Help!" The prison personnel were not able to shut them up right away and spectators at the game were intrigued by the shouts for help which they could clearly hear.

This incident became the talk of the town for a while, and the Securitate officers, following several indiscretions

of prison personnel, came in and questioned the director. Others, especially civilians, informed the prosecutor of the Bacau tribunal. And the commandant of the Securitate, probably on his own initiative without instructions from the Party, ordered an investigation into the matter. It turned out to be only a formal inquiry, and the prisoners were then promised that no one would touch them and the guilty parties would be appropriately dealt with. But though the beatings and the blackmail stopped, and unmaskings for all practical purposes terminated, those who had tortured the students went absolutely scatheless, continuing to make life miserable for the prisoners and at the same time to hold the best positions in the prison.

In the Ocnele-Mari prison the unmaskings did not become any milder. In the large prison population there, in addition to the "political detainees," there were a great many "criminals," who were included with the political prisoners because their crimes, for the most part minor ones, were considered to have political overtones. (These crimes included possession of firearms, attempting to flee the country, cursing prominent Communist personalities, etc.) The greatest proportion of them, though elderly, were able to hold tools in their hands, so the Directorate of Penitentiaries opened a large furniture workshop in which all those capable were obliged to work. This arrangement precluded the rigorous isolation possible at Pitesti and prisoners could meet more freely and exchange either information or rumors from the interior of the prison, particularly while in the workshop.

The arrival of students changed all this. All the work in the corridors was taken care of by students; the kitchen, watchmen's duty, distribution of meals, the shower room, laundry room, etc. became the responsibility of the stu-

dents, a fact which created envy and later hatred on the part of the common criminal prisoners who up to that time had had the benefits of these jobs. Gradually the entire life of the prison's interior fell under the control of the students. They circulated freely along the corridors, entered cells whenever they pleased, under pretext of housecleaning or any other excuse, eavesdropping by cell doors and recording anything discussed inside, especially if the cells were occupied by more important political personalities. They mixed unnoticed among groups in the courtyard when outings for fresh air were permitted; they were to be found everywhere, their ears peeled, gathering information for the "dossier" of those to be put through the unmaskings.

The first victims were chosen and isolated in the small cells of the prison's north wing. Among whom were: Atanase Papanace, a prisoner for three years but still not tried or sentenced; the lawyer Mateias from Fagaras; the worker Gheorghe Caranica, a prisoner since Antonescu's time, held for over nine years and although he had served his time, the Communists would not free him; the lawyer Nicolae Matusu, former secretary of the Peasant Party in Greece and a refugee in Romania during the war, etc. There were about ten in this first group of victims.

The re-educators, as they later admitted, did not expect resistance from these people, considering their age. But they were indeed surprised. Not only did those men resist, but the other inmates heard about the situation very quickly, and reacted. Prominent personalities, such as Professor Mihai Manoilescu, former cabinet minister; Solomon, Gheorghe Pop, Petre Tutea, Vojen, and others, immediately warned the prison's administrator that if the tortures were not stopped, they would all declare a hunger

strike resulting in mass suicide. Because there was contact with the outside world through visitors or through incoming common prisoners, the directorate of unmaskings was worried lest information about the atrocities get out. As a result, he ordered that re-education through violence cease.

A somewhat unique case is that of the camps for extermination by slave labor, established at the Danube-Black Sea Canal.* Here, the principal means for extermination was the brutally hard work. In its name the greatest abuses were committed, as if for a mythical ruling deity, and the greatest crimes perpetrated. The behavior of the re-educated students sent here by Colonel Zeller for "verifying the sincerity of their conversion," is here recorded.

The Peninsula Labor Colony was the pompous name for one of these camps which nurtured crimes against human beings, crimes committed by the use of methods as bestial as those in the extermination camps of Communist Russia. The *Colony* was opened in the fall of 1950. In an open field on which the thistles grew and where in the past grazed the sheep of the Valea-Neagra village, on the edge of the Siut-Ghiol lake, the first barracks were built by common criminals and "pioneers," after first surrounding themselves with three rows of barbed wire.

Under the supervision of armed-to-the-teeth troops, there arrived from various prisons throughout the country massive transports of those who, for the next three years, were to fight hunger, cold, wet ground, and especially the viciousness of the Communists who stood over them while they dug a simple hole in the ground several miles long, for

*A total of 11 camps, according to Ion Carja's *Intoarcerea din Infern . . . pp.* 12-14. — *Editor.*

no other purpose than that of burying in it several thousands of exhausted bodies ...

From Pitesti were sent about 300 students, all of whom had passed through re-education and were under sentences of less than ten years. When the first contingent of students arrived the colony numbered over 3,500 political prisoners. The students were quartered in barracks No. 13 and No. 14, each barrack having a capacity of 150-170 prisoners. The students were put by themselves as a precaution, so they would not make contacts which could "deteriorate" their condition, especially in the evenings after work, because once inside the barracks, administrative control was next to impossible. A quartering of students in scattered groups throughout the various other barracks in the camp would have weakened not only the foundation of their new convictions but also their shock potential, on which the Communists were counting greatly at the beginning.

The living conditions and routine at this canal camp were totally different from those at Pitesti prison. In place of the hermetically closed cell, supervised by the administration through a peephole in the door, here you had barracks simply partitioned into four sections, each holding forty beds each.

Prisoners left in the morning from an open area outside called the "plateau." All work brigades assembled there and one could talk more or less freely with other inmates — quite a contrast to the strictness and permanent isolation maintained at the Pitesti prison. Although the administration's orders forbade mixing of the brigades while preparing for roll call, in practice the measure remained ineffective, for several thousand prisoners stepping out of barracks in the half-dark of early morning could not be

efficiently controlled. Also the spirit of solidarity, which prevailed at that time at the canal among the prisoners, demanded a measure of foresight in the administration to prevent an immediate contamination, an inverse shock, as the students knew nothing, absolutely nothing of what was going on in other prisons.

In addition to the two special barracks reserved for students, there were three reserved for Legionaries who were considered dangerous to the colony's discipline and who were subjected to a very rigorous control and surveillance. These barracks were designated as A, B, and C, and were closely watched because the solidarity of the Legionary group was only too well known. Another barrack, designated O, held all those prisoners who were being punished for acts inside the "camp." They were almost all headstrong, insubordinate, and were in permanent conflict with the officers there and the political officials sent by the Ministry of the Interior.

In the two student barracks, a climate of terror like that at Pitesti was maintained to the greatest extent possible from the very first evening. Some time was allowed for observing the students' first reactions. The shock was supported quite well, at least so the experimenters thought, as the students did not falter in their habit of blind obedience.

The first mission entrusted to the students coming from Pitesti was that of overseeing work on the construction site. Students were named brigade leaders, in other words, made directly responsible for the output of those in their charge. They were ordered, first, to increase the amount of work to be accomplished, and second, to see to it that "bandits" were killed slowly by cumulative physical ex-

haustion without anyone's being able directly to prove premeditated extermination.

Many of the students fulfilled their "mission" with zeal. From among the names of those who will not be easily forgotten, I give here several that are representative: Bogdanescu, chief of all students at the canal and first-brigadier; Laitin; the Grama brothers (one of whom later hanged himself); Enachescu; Cojocaru; Climescu; Stoicanescu; Lupascu; Morarescu; etc. In addition to their contribution to the construction of the canal, the students had to continue the work of unmasking other prisoners. For this they resorted to a new method which, besides producing the desired results, was supposed also to test the feasibility of applying the system under different conditions. This method, broadly, was as follows:

After the evening roll call, when in the camp's interior any kind of movement was strictly forbidden and the guards walked their beats armed, the individual in question was discreetly asked to step out of his barracks and invited to follow the person waiting for him, who was none other than a student from barrack No. 13. Usually the student covered him with a blanket so he could not see where he was being taken. All of this took place under the eye of the guards who pretended to see nothing. The only ones permitted to walk between barracks after lights-off were the students charged with bringing in victims.

Once the prisoner arrived at the students' barracks he was subjected to the known torture methods. But here in the camp one could not ignore the fact that the victims yelled. At Pitesti the prison's isolation made it an ideal place, but at the canal camp the proximity of the other barracks created a great inconvenience. But this difficulty was resolved by the use of an old method quite dear to

the first police of the Communist regime in Russia. To cover the shouts of the victims, a group of students was constantly engaged in — making noise! They would sing in loud voices (no large earth-moving machinery could be brought into the camp to provide a racket) not exactly songs but what amounted to frenetic shouts of joy, changing melodies, and explosive yells, in order to cover up the agonized yells of the tortured victims inside the barracks.

Many were the victims of unmaskings at the Peninsula and some of them paid with their lives for the mistake of accepting a student's invitation. One among the victims in particular, whose case shook the entire "colony," was Dr. Simionescu.

Dr. Simionescu was a distinguished figure both in the old Romanian political circles and in the medical societies. Professionally very well prepared, he was one of the best surgeons in Romania before the war. He was a man of deeds; he occupied no definite position in the hierarchy of officialdom.

Arrested in 1949, he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for having "plotted against the legal social order"!!! Although he had actually been in the past an active member of the Cuzist Party,* he was arrested for having kept in touch with a group of political personalities in the National Peasant Party. He was sent to Aiud to serve his sentence where, in the spring of 1951, I shared the same cell with him for a while. At the beginning of March he was with a large group of us prisoners brought by van to the canal, where he was to continue serving his

*See above, p. xxx. It is noteworthy that while the party to which the doctor belonged was emphatically patriotic and nationalistic, he was convicted of association with members of the most "democratic" of the political parties, one whose leaders had on several occasions sought "negotiations" with the Soviet. (*Tr.*)

sentence at labor, even though his age was too advanced for it.

I, who am endowed with a quite robust physique, was astonished that the elderly doctor never complained, not even when we were obliged to unload wet dirt from freight cars in bitter cold or freezing rain. After a short stop at the Poarta Alba camp along the canal, we were sent on to the Peninsula camp on May 5, 1951. The presence of Dr. Simionescu in the camp was immediately noticed, for he was the only "cabinet member" to have arrived up to then. (The Communist puppet directors of the Romanian prisons, in their simplemindedness, referred to all former high government officials as "cabinet members," and they extended the designation to the doctor, even though he had been only a highly respected professional man.) The re-educators turned him over immediately to Bogdanescu. They could not forget that the doctor was a member of the generation that had constituted a permanent stumbling block to Communism in Romania.

One evening he was invited into the students' barracks, and it was at this time that his Calvary began. I could not learn exactly which tortures were inflicted on him that night; the doctor himself related nothing. But the traces left could not be hidden, for the next morning, before the brigades went to work, the doctor went to the infirmary with three broken ribs, and his whole body was black and blue, with here and there globs of coagulated blood. At the infirmary, in addition to the regular personnel, the camp's director, Lieutenant Georgescu, was present; for no medical diagnosis was accepted as correct unless it had been approved by one of the political officers.

The physician asked Dr. Simionescu about the cause of the lesions only as a matter of form for he, as well as

everybody else in the camp, knew very well by whom and how they were inflicted. Simionescu replied briefly, without much detail, that he had been taken to barrack No. 13, where he was tortured by the students for reasons unknown to him. Then Lieutenant Georgescu, who had thus far watched the examination in silence, intervened. He, whose duty it was to maintain "legality inside the camp", shouted:

"Bandit, you are the victim of your own convictions! Those whom you, as a cabinet minister, were charged to educate, have beaten you! It is a pity you escaped so lightly! Get to work now and don't let me catch you here again, for if I do, I'll break your legs as well!!" Naturally, the camp's physician dared not recommend any kind of treatment.

From that instant, Dr. Simionescu was practically condemned to death. He was tortured in the students' barracks night after night; he was subjected day after day to toil beyond his strength in the special brigade supervised by students. His body was enfeebled by so many beatings at night; and when at work he could not perform the labors his tormentors demanded, the students beat him into unconsciousness right under the eyes of the Securitate's guards. He was old enough to be the father of any of the students who tortured him.

Another and more subtle form of torture was also applied to Dr. Simionescu. He was forced to deceive his own family. At the canal, unlike the other prisons, prisoners were allowed to communicate with their families under certain conditions. There was a permanent shortage of foodstuffs, and in keeping with the Communist principle that "the enemies of the people must not feed on the backs of the people," the food distributed by the camp's administration was so insufficient that the inmates were subjected

to a slow, methodical starvation that could be relieved only by the packets of food that prisoners were allowed to receive from the families outside. This provided a simple and easy means of keeping the slave-laborers under perfect control, for, of course, the precious privilege of receiving such indispensible nourishment was granted only to prisoners who fulfilled their labor norms and obeyed every caprice of the administrators and guards. The arrangement had the further advantage that it placed a great burden on the impoverished families of the prisoners, who had to support their loved ones with goods taken from their own meager rations. The added hardships and sacrifices thus imposed on the families were, of course, not unpleasing to the Communists.

Dr. Simionescu took advantage of this privilege or "benefit" as it was called. So his torturers forced him to write home the appeals they dictated. He was even visited by his wife after a time. Throughout this visit a representative of the political officer was present. The doctor had to lie, saying that everything was fine, that no one should worry about him — and he was doubtless glad to keep up the spirits of his wife, who did not even imagine that she was seeing him for the last time!

From the parlor the doctor was taken directly to the students' barracks. There he was forced to crawl under the "brigadier's" table, while above him Bogdanescu, together with the re-education committee, feasted on what his wife, through hardship and privation, had managed to bring him from home.

"You have sucked long enough the sweat of the working people, bandit! When you were banqueting, the workers were shot because they fought for a piece of bread. Is it not so, Mr. Minister? From now on it is your turn to

suffer in order to pay for the sins of yesteryear." The derision was, as usual, followed by a beating, which was all the half-starved man received for the food brought him by his wife who had, by the way, been reduced to the utmost penury by the confiscation of all their property.

His anguish lasted quite a long time, until in despair he decided to cut the thread of his life. In keeping with his principles, however, he wanted to die, not by his own hand, but at the hands of his torturers. So in broad daylight, at work, although exhausted by beatings and lack of sleep, and broken by labor and unspeakable humiliations, he dared advance toward the line of uniformed guards and try to cross over to the other side. But where? In broad daylight and in the middle of a zone full of watchful eyes? Any of the Securitate soldiers could grab him by the sleeve and bring him back. He could hardly walk. Thus, he did not run. The gesture was premeditated and it was consummated as he had foreseen. For the mission of those guards was not to preserve lives, but to liquidate as many as possible, especially when they were given a "legal" opportunity. When Dr. Simionescu reached the danger zone, a short burst of shots was heard: a Securitate man had emptied his automatic pistol into the doctor, who had collapsed only a few yards from him. Several men went to pick up the victim and bring him to the working area. He was still alive, and could have been saved. But this was not to be. He was finished off before the watching students, who, in their turn, were astonished by what they were witnessing for the first time. The doctor's body was carried into the center of the encampment so all the "bandits" could see and take notice. Then it was hauled to the Navodari cemetery for burial among his former companions-in-agony killed by bullets, hunger, or torture — without a service for the dead, without a cross, without

a candle, just exactly in accordance with Communist custom.

The soldier who shot Dr. Simionescu was rewarded with a bonus, a promotion, and a furlough!

Dr. Simionescu's death could not be kept secret, as was that of so many who were killed in prisons. Many outsiders knew what went on in the canal labor camps. Contacts between prisoners and persons from the "greater prison" (as the canal laborers called the Communist-occupied country outside) was inevitable, because quite frequently outside technicians and engineers either sought the technical assistance and advice of their confreres in the camp or used the brawn of inmates without "professional qualifications," which included lawyers, priests, doctors, and other well-educated men. Many outside even had in the camp a brother, a father, a colleague or friend; or if they had none of these, they saw in the prisoners their own brothers, i.e., people like themselves. That is why the help of those who were still relatively free was unquestioningly given, materially and morally, with all the risks that this involved. And not a few men ended up behind barbed wire, side by side with those they had helped.

One such person, either directly or by letter, informed the doctor's family. Someone came and claimed the body. Someone else, it seems, requested an audience at the Ministry of the Interior to get an explanation of why he had been shot to death. The authorities could not pass this off with a casual explanation, and shortly thereafter, a colonel in the Securitate, Cosmici, accompanied by his colleague Colonel Craciunas, arrived at the canal to begin an investigation. Here, as is normal Communist practice, you have superiors investigating their own subalterns, who had faithfully carried out orders issued by the very Ministry

of which the investigators were a part and which had ordered the whole experiment in the first place!

Several persons were called into the office and interrogated quite summarily, more often than not on matters quite unrelated to the matter in hand. Then the colonels departed for Bucharest to report their findings.

At the beginning of September, or perhaps the very end of August, a group of about ten students from the canal camp were selected to be sent somewhere. It was learned later that they went to the Ministry of the Interior for questioning in connection with Simionescu's death, but the students, who had been told to bring all their baggage with them, jumped to the conclusion that they were to be freed before the end of their sentences for behavior conforming to Communist expectations, especially since they recalled the semi-official promise given them at Pitesti. At the gate they were put in chains! This was a special mark of attention enjoyed only by those sentenced to more than fifteen years, or prisoners who were apprehended after escape, but the students took the chains as being just another cover-up, concealing an intention to liberate them, and so left the camp somewhat joyfully.

But the sight of chains on those departing students signaled a change which could have been foreseen by the prisoners better initiated into the mysteries of Communist logic. When a change is in the making, even one of minor importance, there are clear preliminary indications, the most obvious one being that the officials in charge are removed. In Communist theory it is axiomatic that as an ideology, Communism is infallible, and errors, when committed, are due to opportunism or the incompetence of the individuals called on to apply the "Party Line." Such being the case, the one who pays the piper is naturally

not the one who issued the orders, but the one who carried them out and life-long dedication to the Party will avail him nothing. If Molotov could not master all the working rules of Marxism in fifty years,* what can one expect of less talented and less experienced individuals? Invariably, when any project or policy that is initially applauded as a triumph of Communist genius and planning, is changed, the blame for the change is laid on the shoulders of the individual who had the misfortune to carry out the orders. The scapegoat idea is so deeply embedded in Communist practice that it is considered a law. And this pattern was, of course, observed at the Peninsula.

The first obvious indication of coming change was the removal of Georgescu, the administrative head though perhaps the man least responsible in reality, who was sent to a post of lesser importance, but not otherwise punished. He was replaced by another prison director, Captain Lazar, a militia officer notorious for the terror he imposed at the Fagaras prison, where former army officers accused of collaboration with Antonescu or of having joined anti-Communist brigades were imprisoned, together with practically all of the old regime's police force. Each of the prison directors had a favorite means of punishment and Lazar chose — the beating pole.

Other changes followed at the Peninsula, as if by magic. Students were taken out of barracks No. 13 and No. 14 and

*Scryabin, better known under his Russian alias of Molotov, was one of the leading agents of the Jewish revolution in Russia, having begun his criminal career as a Communist conspirator in 1906, and held positions near the top of the Soviet government ever since the overthrow of Czar Nicholas II. He was a member of the triumvirate that succeeded Djugashvili (alias Stalin), but was, with his confederates, replaced by Khruschev in 1959 and exiled to Outer Mongolia. Thus at the time that he missed his footing, he had more than fifty years' experience in the Bolshevik terrorist organization, forty of them near the top of the managerial hierarchy. It is to this that the author here refers. (*Tr.*)

scattered throughout the other barracks. The special work brigades which had inaugurated a terror theretofore unknown were disbanded, and the re-educated students were removed from positions of trust which they had held. But the change was even more far-reaching than this. Lazar himself became a different man. In contrast to his brutality at Fagaras, he now appeared to be a civilized man with whom one could talk!

He rejected carloads of carrots and pickles destined for the prisoners' diet on the pretext that one cannot accomplish work with undernourished men. Sanitary conditions became tolerable; working hours were reduced; production quotas were reduced to more reasonable levels. Except for those who were always disposed to interpret the course of international politics by the degree of "the soup's viscosity", no one considered this change as indicating a permanent new era, for what Lazar did was on orders from Bucharest. But this change was truly amazing and unique, for no other director, either before or after him, ever showed a similar attitude. And as an irony of fate, his own daughter fell in love with a prisoner and did everything in her power to influence her father to behave humanely.

The disbanding of the brigades headed by re-educated students and the replacement of director Georgescu produced an evolution of the Pitesti experiment along novel lines. It is quite possible that the initiators of the experiment might have decided to test the "re-educated" under conditions different from those under which they had undergone their unmasking at Pitesti. The memory of those conditions was kept fresh in the minds of the re-educated students by a sub-group completely loyal to the political officers at the canal. Each group seemed to alter-

nate in dominance, through conditioned reflexes established at Pitesti. But what happened among the students thereafter deserves particular attention because it discloses totally unforeseen aspects of the human soul — at least of the souls of those who for more than two years had been transformed into something other than human beings.

Escaping from the terror of their former milieu, from that closed-in hell in which they reciprocally tormented each other; seeing that the administration no longer supported those in charge of maintaining the atmosphere created at Pitesti; and finding that on the contrary they were looked upon with a significant "lack of understanding," — the students gradually began to change their own attitude toward both their colleagues and the other prisoners. Little by little, where before even the thought was impossible, some began a process of self-examination, of critical analysis, or, as it was said back home, a digging out of the problems covered by the ashes of terror. Timidly at first, then with greater daring and in increasingly greater numbers, the students gradually began to see things through their own eyes and to draw logical conclusions without quailing in fear of being suspected of thinking other than as ordered.

This process was prolonged and quite painful. It seemed like a returning from Hell, on the way out of a hideous, deformed world — a return from other shores, or an awakening from a long nightmare that left visible marks on body and soul. They were like blind men beginning to see; they feared the light, were suspicious of it, considered it unreal, impossible. But as a dam is slowly eroded by the water escaping from a fissure, so their doubt was gradually worn away and slowly replaced by a love of life, of honesty, of dignity, the beast of yesterday reverting to manhood.

The wide diversity of character among the victims accounted for the wide range of time taken by their recovery. Some who had suffered less and were naturally more pliant regained their old selves almost immediately. But for others the comeback was most difficult — much time had to pass, month upon month, their wounds being too deep to heal rapidly. The deeper contoured structures, which had yielded with great difficulty and shown the greatest resistance during the unmaskings, also retained the most stubbornly the alien shape that had been imposed on them. Moreover, the students suddenly expelled from barracks No. 13 and No. 14 and scattered among the other prisoners found themselves in radically changed circumstances. They also had to reckon with some of the political officers and the stool pigeons who served the Communists without being forced and even without being asked, all of whom saw in the students' possible comeback a danger to their personal "careers," (even though a decrease in the number of informers would normally have enhanced each one's value). In any case, a whole host of different attitudes bristled and clashed under the horribly unnatural conditions of a slave-labor camp.

But in many of the students, little by little, the wounds of the past whose scars would perhaps remain forever, began to heal, bringing a certain self-control, but not forgetfulness — that would never come.

But the Communists will not give up. They will only change the application of "re-education" and perhaps improve the methods.*

*It is not unlikely that the sudden change at the slave-labor camp was made to determine the degree of permanence of the re-education in individuals of different characters. (*Tr.*)

CHAPTER XX

THE DEMON PERSISTS

At the time the experiment at the canal came to an end, unmaskings at Gherla prison, on the banks of the Somes River in northern Romania, reached an intensity that perhaps surpassed even the most difficult moments at Pitesti.

In contrast with what was tried in the prisons already mentioned, the system at Gherla was designed to push the technique to its utmost possibilities, extending it to categories of prisoners other than the students.

For this purpose, a sizable group of re-educated students was sent by the Ministry to Gherla as a sort of avant-garde charged with laying the groundwork by gathering information about the atmosphere and outlook among the prisoners there. When others capable of work at Pitesti were sent to the canal, Turcanu was sent to Gherla, accompanied by his immediate entourage who were most devoted to him and also the most adept at use of the bludgeon. They prepared the way for the larger contingents that were sent later.

Special measures were taken by the political administration of the prison in advance of Turcanu's arrival. The entire fourth floor was evacuated for use in unmaskings, and placed at Turcanu's disposal. All the students from Pitesti were to be incarcerated in the cells on this floor, the top one of the main prison building.

Gherla prison was second in importance only to Aiud. Originally a reformatory for minor delinquents, it was

adapted to other uses as the conflict between the Romanian populace and their Communist masters developed. It was then equipped with special workshops in which the condemned, without regard to length of sentence or state of health, were subjected to working conditions much worse than at the canal.

The hundreds of students transferred to Gherla were all left on the fourth floor in their cells for quite some time, completely isolated from the rest of the inmates. Then their screening began anew, under the direct supervision of the Securitate Lieutenant Avadanei, the new political appointee in charge of re-education. The students were then re-grouped and sent into workshops, with specific missions to accomplish.

Contact between the new prisoners and the old was established then without any difficulty. None of the older prisoners could even guess that those newly arrived were living in a different world and governed by laws other than human ones. Their reception was as natural as could be, with much warmth, even with joy and relief, for the placing of a student corps in their midst was a pleasant surprise and considered by the workers as probably a mistake on the part of the Communists![†]

Soon, however, a very few of the new arrivals tried to warn their destined victims, for despite their inculcated terror, a small grain of humanity, encysted in their souls, could not continue dormant under the warmth of their reception by the older prisoners at Gherla. Among the hundreds of students there were several who mustered the courage to caution one or more of the older men to beware

†The reader must remember the peculiar situation in Romania where university students, being a select and intellectually superior group with a reputation for integrity, patriotism and love of God, were highly respected. See pages xxiv ff. above. (*Tr.*)

of them. Great as was the risk they took, equally great was the inability of those being warned to comprehend what they were being told. It seemed to them incredible — surely these warnings must be prompted by the Communists, who for a long time had been conducting a campaign of defamation against the students as a class. If a student spoke evil of his colleagues, how could the individual being warned verify the statements except by asking another student, whom he had known on the outside as a dedicated anti-Communist? And the contingents of students sent to Gherla pretended to be still staunchly anti-Communist in order to gain the confidence of the older prisoners and learn from them everything that might be useful to the administration.

The mad attempt by a few of the students to warn of what was to come was made in vain. None of the workers would believe the monstrosities with which the students were charged. For one thing, there was not much real opportunity for extended conversation to elucidate the warnings, and there was always the risk of being overheard and reported — a danger that maintained the conditioned reflex of fear in the students. Although a few had the courage to talk to workers in the prison shops, it did not enter their minds to discuss among themselves the possibility of a general change of the state of mind induced by their re-education at Pitesti. They dared not trust one another! So there was no concerted effort made to warn the workers — only a few scattered gestures by isolated individuals here and there. But this did not prevent Turcanu from learning about what was going on.

Among the students who arrived in the first lot was one named Rodas, originally from Ploesti. When he first went to work, he met former friends in the underground, men

in whom he had complete faith. Taking advantage of a moment of freedom from surveillance, he related to one of them the entire drama of Pitesti in simple words, trying to make it clear to him as quickly as possible, as he knew he did not have much time. His friend listened attentively, but could hardly believe what he heard. So he tried to verify the story by asking another student whom he trusted. Actually, he hoped to get a repudiation of a story that seemed perfectly incredible. And, as he had expected, the student put his mind at ease, saying, "Rodas is an informer for the Securitate, and what he said is part of an infamous plan set up by the Communists to compromise the students!" The worker went to bed reassured; a heavy burden was lifted from his heart; and the next day he told his friends to beware of Rodas. The informer immediately reported to Turcanu, for so far as he was concerned, from his heart, too, was lifted a burden, for he, as it turned out, was Rodas's surveillant — a pure coincidence!

The next day, Turcanu entered a cell on the fourth floor and ordered all the students to face the wall. Then he called out, ordering somebody in the corridor to come in. When the students were ordered to turn around, they saw standing beside Turcanu a person with a sack over his head so they could not recognize him. And when in the silent cell Turcanu jerked the sack off, they still could not recognize the man, for before them stood a figure with a grotesquely disfigured head, his entire face one swollen bluish wound. Large globs of blood covered his features, stringing downward over his clothes. The man was visibly shaking on his feet, hardly able to stand upright. His whole body trembled as though siezed with chills. A corpse-like pallor spread over the faces of all the students as they fearfully gazed, trying in vain to identify the victim and imagine a reason for such disfiguration.

"Rodas squealed," said Turcanu, and then everyone understood. "I have ears everywhere," continued the monster. "A word to the wise . . . to all who eventually may be tempted to talk. This is the first case; the next one will not be brought before you to see, for he will not live . . . Just so you all may know." This scene was repeated in almost all the cells on the floor. After such a spectacle, could anyone contemplate warning the workers again?

I observed several times during my years in prison that witnessing the suffering and torture of another often has a stronger psychological effect than one's own suffering. Prolonged physical torture eventually produces a sort of analgesia, which if it does not deaden the pain of blows, at least diminishes its intensity. But invariably, when you see someone else being tortured, the image produced in your mind becomes fantastically exaggerated and has a truly polarizing effect on the consciousness. This phenomenon was so useful to the Communists that they gave it a name, "witnessing-the-spectacle," and used it systematically in investigations in general, and particularly in unmaskings at Pitesti. The individual who "witnessed the spectacle" was seized by such fear that his very intestines froze within him.

The effect, then, that Rodas's appearance had on the students at Gherla can be guessed. Thereafter all the students were ostentatious in manifesting a provocative anti-Communist attitude in order to obtain information for dossiers on their future victims. In the evening they would dutifully prepare their reports for the committee, where cross-checks were made.

The appearance of the students who were taken to the workshops was most deplorable. The terror, hunger, and the regimen of isolation to which they had been subjected

for months on the fourth floor had turned them into living phantoms. Many workers, out of love or charity, shared their own poor rations with them hoping to help. The student accepted food, for hunger is invincible; but once his hunger was appeased, terror took its place. And he would report in the evening that he had accepted Legionary help from the so-and-so bandit!!

Little by little, day after day, the dossiers were being built up, with emphasis on information leading to identifying workers who had the most influence in the prison. Unmaskings were resumed, Room 99 on the fourth floor being retained for this purpose. It faced northeast, away from the town, its windows looking down on the inner courtyard of the prison, and was considered most suitable as no one from outside could hear the screams and blows. It had two doors but was not contiguous to any other cell. Not far away, however, still in the inner wing and on the same floor, were three smaller cells, 96, 97 and 98, which were kept for use in case of unusual resistance, as was another small cell, 101, in the front wing. In these small cells veritable orgies of torture took place.

The activities on the fourth floor at Gherla could not be completely concealed from the other inmates of the prison, especially those whose cells were on the floors immediately below. They noticed first of all that while on the other floors members of the staff and prisoners passed frequently along the railed balconies outside the cells looking on the inner court, there was no movement on the balcony of the fourth floor. Some of the prisoners wondered about this and guessed that something unusual must be happening up there. Then one day they witnessed a remarkable scene. Suddenly, at one end of the fourth-floor balcony, the door of a corner cell (Room 99) was flung open and out darted

a figure, his face covered with blood, who dashed along the balcony and down the stairway pell-mell, yelling at the top of his voice that he was being murdered by his cell-mates. In hot pursuit came the O.D.C.C. boys out of Room 99, who caught him as he headed for the administration office, and dragged him, screaming and struggling, back up the stairs. Then all disappeared into Room 99.

The bleeding victim was a young student, Bubi Roman from Timisoara Polytechnical School, who had been one of the most dedicated of anti-Communists. To quiet the talk among the workers in the shops, the O.D.C.C. put into circulation the story that Roman suffered from paranoia, and that his mental condition had deteriorated until his delusions of persecution had become violent insanity. To make this fiction more plausible, for several days thereafter they ostentatiously conducted Roman daily to the infirmary, where Dr. Barbosu gave him hypodermic injections that were falsely described as powerful sedatives.

After this incident, the surveillance over the fourth floor was intensified. The door of Room 99 was never under any circumstances left unlocked; no one being subjected to unmaskings was left unguarded for even a moment; and supplemental beatings were administered for even the slightest gesture that could be interpreted as an attempt "to sabotage the unmaskings."

The director of Gherla prison at this time was a Securitate captain named Gheorghiu, whose unique characteristic was cynicism. And he had a temper that would flare up, for instance, if a newly arrived prisoner admitted he was condemned for only five or ten years; but he was very happy when a prisoner admitted a 25-year sentence! "This," he used to say, "is Gherla University. When you

graduate (but I do not believe you ever will) you will be true men. Until then, I am your master."

The political officer was Lieutenant Avadanei, a Moldavian from the Botosani region, and, some say, a former elementary school teacher. Extremely evil, he felt some kind of fiendish satisfaction in trampling upon the bodies of prisoners until they fainted. At Gherla there was plenty of proof that bestiality, when unleashed, and nurtured by fear, becomes a sort of necessity, an insatiable appetite that can never be satisfied, and grows in direct proportion to its exercise.

At Gherla, one beat another only for the pleasure of it, no longer to destroy a belief or supplant it with another, or extort secrets, or disfigure the soul. One beat senselessly. Workers and students, young and old, educated and the illiterate, were all tortured the same, even when they had nothing more to say, could not confess any more than they already had, could not be any further degraded.

During the war, Captain Magirescu was sent to the Russian front whence he returned without one of his legs. Arrested and condemned in 1948 at Iasi for anti-Communist activity, he was sent to Gherla, where he worked in the workshop. Then he was put in room 99 for unmasking. In the end, they beat him over the scar of his half-leg with broomsticks until his mouth opened — as did his wound.

Others at Gherla in room 99 while undergoing unmasking were forced to move their bowels into the mess-pans in which they normally received their soup. They were then forced, during continued beating, to eat their own feces from the dish.

The peasant Ball from the Hunedoara region was kept for several nights hanging by his armpits, having a stone-

loaded knapsack on his back, his feet hanging two inches above the floor so he could not rest his weight. And because it seemed to his tormentors that his burden was too light, they also would climb on his back. And his was not the only case!

Prisoners were forced to "polish" the *"samot"* (a kind of rubbery material covering the floors) even though this was an impossibility; they scrubbed at this ridiculous task hours on end with a dry cloth, while at the same time carrying piggyback two, three or more committee members. When exhausted, their throats choked with the dry dust, they collapsed, they were not allowed to lie there and rest, but were given more beatings.

Another interesting custom was that of requiring inmates to crawl under a wooden bed from one end to the other, using only their elbows to propel them through, the body held perfectly straight, without any help from the knees. As they came to each end they were met by committee members with clubs to indicate when to turn around. For hours, morning or afternoon, this sport was enjoyed by the re-educators whenever they felt the urge. Only prisoners lucky enough to faint in the process were left in peace.

At other times, they were ordered to crawl part way under the bed, then suddenly stand up straight through the bed-boards, throwing everything into disarray, messing up the handful of clothing remaining to them after years of detention, and then ordered by the use of clubs, to remake the beds in half a minute with the headrest just as high as before.

It was at Gherla also that prisoners were forced to "run the gauntlet" between two rows of re-educators armed with

broomsticks — not just once, but back and forth again and again, slowly. At this prison the use of lavatories was at times absolutely forbidden, with consequences that can be imagined.

But sadistic torture was not the only kind indulged in at Gherla: there was also humorous torture, accompanied by jokes! One victim, considered the greater bandit, was obliged to stand on the shoulders of a lesser bandit, and from there launch himself into the air, simulating an airplane at landing. This was repeated until he landed perfectly flat, or broke his ribs.

CHAPTER XXI

DESPERATE ENDEAVORS

At Gherla, as at Pitesti, there were prisoners who watched for any opportunity, the slightest relaxation of surveillance, to commit suicide. Others tried to tell the director of the prison what was being done on the fourth floor, even though they could not really expect anything in the way of corrective measures from those who had ordered the whole experiment, or from those who conducted it and reaped the harvest from it. These desperate endeavors bordered on insanity. But then, everything that happened at Gherla was a sort of madness, a collective insanity seizing administrators and prisoners alike, who competed to destroy everything that could be called human in a world where, long ago, man had been reduced to a hated animal to be exterminated by hunger and terror.

The first prisoner who tried to approach the administration was a Macedonian worker named E.O., from Banat, who had been condemned to ten years at hard labor. One day, while full unmaskings were in progress, his cell was visited by an inspector from the Ministry of the Interior, General Nicolschi himself, who was in charge of the General Office of Investigations for the whole country. The routine followed during his visit was like that at Pitesti: the prisoners stood at attention, having been warned by the re-educators not to speak, but only listen to the General. Suddenly, when nobody expected it, E.O. broke ranks and requested permission to speak. The inspector was so surprised, he let him talk.

As rapidly as he could, for he knew the opportunity would not last long, he related to the inspector all that he and his cellmates were suffering; asked that measures be taken to stop the torturings and to punish those responsible for them. Director Gheorghiu, who witnessed this scene, feigned so perfectly to be impressed and visibly surprised that the victims themselves could have believed that he knew nothing about such things happening. He told General Nicolschi that he knew nothing of torturings, that no one had ever reported anything of the sort to him, that he would investigate personally to learn how much of what E.O. said was true, and that he would take the necessary steps to correct the situation, if it actually existed. The Inspector General was prompt to promise that he would look into the matter himself, and that he would personally see to it that the guilty parties were punished. Both Nicolschi and Gheorghiu ignored the obvious evidence before their very eyes, the condition of the prisoners at that very moment — their battered faces and the black and blue contusions on their emaciated bodies, visible, of course, on E.O. as he made his report.

Of course no investigation was ever made, nor any remedial steps taken. Instead, Turcanu instituted reprisals, consisting this time of pulling off toenails with pliers, necessarily supplied by the administration for that purpose. This happened in the tiny cell in which E.O. was isolated after making his report. When I met him in 1954, he could eat only bread and potatoes, for by the time he left that cell, his liver had been destroyed.

Despite later denials, the entire experiment was supervised and coordinated by the Communist Ministry of the Interior — by General Nicolschi or his superiors. Two students, Popescu and Andreescu, who had undergone unmasking while at Pitesti, were summoned to a supplemen-

tary inquisition in Bucharest. They spent several months there in special cells the Ministry of the Interior maintained on Victoriei Street; then, perhaps because of an oversight on the part of some officer in charge of transportation, they were taken to Jilava, where they remained for some time and were thrown in with the other prisoners. There the warm, friendly atmosphere among the prisoners and their trust of one another helped allay the fear in their hearts. Eventually Popescu and Andreescu told some of them of earlier events at Pitesti, naturally without too much detail. Strangely enough, however, the moment they arrived at Gherla, the O.D.C.C. committee already knew everything they had told the inmates at Jilava. Through its informers the prison administration at Jilava had learned of it, transmitted the report to the Ministry, which in turn warned Turcanu. The suspicion of their being "opportunists" — a term used at Pitesti for those who appeared to have been won over but remained "bandits" at heart — was sufficient grounds for their being forced to submit again to the entire gamut of torture, in the company of others who were passing through unmasking for the first time.

Some prisoners tried to escape from the unmaskings by choosing the supreme solution, suicide. The peasant P., from the Constanta region, who had been arrested and condemned to 15 years imprisonment, was brought to Gherla in the summer of 1951, and shortly thereafter taken to room 99. Because he offered resistance, he was isolated in one of the smaller cells and subjected to an individual unmasking under constant surveillance. But one day, left alone for a few minutes, he was able to get a piece of glass from a window pane and awkwardly cut the veins of his neck. He was soon found flat on the floor in a pool of blood; the re-educators in a panic sent to the administration

for help. Director Gheorghiu and the political officer came running, with the prison physician in tow, who stopped the bleeding. When he could be questioned, P. told them that he tried to commit suicide because he could no longer endure the tortures inflicted on him by fellow prisoners for no reason. The director assured him that thenceforth nothing would happen to him, and that those who tortured him would be severely punished, but that he would have to promise never to attempt suicide again. P. promised; the director left the cell. Then immediately entered Turcanu and others, who never left him alone until he capitulated, completely cowed and broken.

Another peasant, this one from Moldavia's Campu-Lung, sought to end his life differently. For writing the declarations during his unmasking, he was given the usual soap tablet and a needle. He broke the needle and swallowed the pieces, thinking to end his agonies; but the needle must have lodged in some marginal tissue, as he suffered not a single ill effect. When the written declaration was required of him, and of course the needle as well, he had only the soap tablet to turn in! He said he had lost the needle. He was then tortured and forced to search for it. In the end he had to confess that he had swallowed it. Now, in addition to ordinary tortures, he was obliged to move his bowels into the mess-pan for three or four days and check to see whether or not the pieces of the needle had been eliminated. Of course he did not find them. The immediate consequence of this was the destruction of his liver by severe beatings, necessitating in time complicated surgery which left him, for the remainder of his life, able to eat only toasted bread and baked potatoes. When I met him in 1953, still in the workshop, he was distributing the bread out in the hall as part of his job; the administration, as a great favor, granted him the privilege of baking for

himself a handful of potato in the prison kitchen. It would be a miracle if he is still alive.

* * * * *

At Gherla the technique of surprise by sudden betrayal was modified, doubtless in the light of experience acquired at Pitesti. Here, for example, is a scene described by a high-school student who was among the last to pass through room 99. He was one of a group of youths arrested and sentenced just before the closing of the "Center for Re-education at Pitesti," and one of the few who, though serving time at Pitesti, miraculously were not subjected to re-education there; as a matter of fact, that was the reason why he was not shipped to the labor camp at the canal. I quote him:

"Having arrived at Gherla, we were quartered in a large cell on the fourth floor, where there were several older students who circulated among us and soon succeeded in gaining our confidence, even coming to know us intimately. Under the circumstances, we felt we could ask their help on various personal problems which we could not solve by ourselves. Thus each of us found himself a confidant, an advisor, a friend. None of us noticed that their principal concern was focused on just two points: our anti-Communist activity, and our attitude toward the prison administration, especially its political officers.

"Around the beginning of September, we were moved into room 99. Here we met other students who received us with the same warmth as those in the first cell.

"Our days were organized according to a schedule which, within the limits of the prison's regulations, was rigorously respected. The day began with prayer said on our knees. Then followed the National-Christian* education

*I.e., the principles and doctrine of the Legion. (*Tr.*)

period, which lasted quite a while. The afternoon was reserved for more informal occupations. There were several groups studying different foreign languages, and you joined the one you wished; lectures were given on various subjects by those who had studied them, to enlarge our general knowledge. The evenings offered the most pleasant moments. Usually someone with literary talent would give us a talk on the work of a Romanian or foreign writer. We would all be seated around him and a warm family atmosphere made us forget the inferno that surrounded us. Patriotic poetry was not neglected, nor even the songs, although the prison rules strictly forbade singing, especially patriotic singing. The day ended with prayer again said on our knees.

"Who could believe that those who led the prayers, appearing almost transfigured with religious fervor, could be perjurors? Could it be that in those moments, taking advantage of the opportunity, they too were truly praying? More than two weeks passed in this manner. Such an atmosphere of perfect harmony prevailed that not a few times I felt a satisfaction in having been arrested, for through my arrest I was privileged to know such men and enjoy such moments! Friendships flowered like buds in the spring! No one could ever suspect how near were the blizzards.

"The room chief was a student from Iasi, Alexandru Popa, not too bright compared with some others, but very active. Turcanu too was in the room. But he was very reserved and went around almost unnoticed. Now and then he, Popa and two or three others would go into a corner and talk in subdued voices. Because they were all from Iasi, and friends besides, no one suspected anything amiss in these private confabs.

"And then all of a sudden, the sky fell in. One evening, at the end of the work day and after the latch was closed on the outside of the cell, we were getting ready for the usual program when Turcanu gave the order that everyone except us (the late arrivals) should form into two rows, leaving a narrow corridor between. Each one had in his hands either a bludgeon, a broomstick, or a belt. Turning to us he ordered us to run the gauntlet between the two rows. We thought this was a game intended to give us all a little fun. But in a few seconds the room reverberated with our shrieks and with the oaths of those beating us. I was by chance at the end of the line. I stopped bewildered, and forgetting that I also must follow where my friends had passed, I got over to the end of one of the beaters' rows beside one of the older ones, and began a frightful yelling, not realizing what I was doing, literally crazed by the spectacle unfolding before my very eyes. I was gesticulating, hands up in the air, like an insane person caught in a crisis. The individual standing by me suddenly recognized me as being one of those supposed to pass under the bludgeons and, grabbing me by the neck, shoved me into the gauntlet. This is how I entered the unmasking. How I came out of it, you had the opportunity of seeing for yourself when you met me. Much time has passed since then and somehow I have succeeded in seeing things more lucidly."

I asked the boy, "How did the beaten group react as a whole, for they must have reacted somehow?"

"I could not say that anybody tried to defend himself," he replied, "for everything happened so fast. Anyway, resistance was useless. If there was any spontaneous reaction, it did not last long. It is true that several of those who were beating us ended up with cracked skulls, but this

was probably accidental in the confused melee; but perhaps it happened intentionally, for among the wielders of weapons there may have been some who struck a "colleague" to revenge some beating received during his own unmasking. Anyhow, when it was all finished, there we were, the wheat with the tares, in a pile of broken and bloody bodies, heaped on the floor. Among these was my body. My soul left me that evening, and it has not yet returned into me entirely, not even now. As at Pitesti, maybe even worse than there, the inner collapse preceded the physical one. For in contrast to Pitesti, this time the students who had taught us and prayed with us took part in the proceedings from the first session. Their presence among the beaters contributed, I believe, to the paralyzing of any possible spirit of resistance.

"Following this, we passed into the usual phase of unmasking, which lasted more than a month and was not much different from the procedure used at Pitesti. Then, there followed a series of two more. I was an 'in position' witness to the first series because I was still considered not fully re-educated. During the second series, some of my colleagues were promoted to the ranks of the re-educated. By now I was witnessing impassively their disintegration, trying only to see in them that which I could not see in me — how a soul is shredded.

"From time to time one of our group would disappear for several days. I had no idea where he was taken. When he returned, he was completely broken. It was only later that I found out that the ones so chosen were put into the small cells down the hall and were there subjected to a continuous individual unmasking."

The "witnessing-of-the-spectacle" was used as at Pitesti, except on a larger scale. The slightest sign of doubt or

of disobedience was immediately punished by bringing the culprit into room 99 to watch an unmasking. The feelings experienced by such witnesses were described to me vividly by one of the scores of students with whom I spoke:

"Watching others being tortured," he said, "I had the impression that I had been bound and placed on a powder keg, and that a madman constantly circled around the keg with a lighted candle. I expected the flame to touch the powder at any moment, and that the keg with me on it would be blown up. That could have happened at any time; in other words, if a re-educator suddenly took the notion that I had been given too light a punishment for my suspected guilt, he could have transferred me from 'spectator' to 'sufferer' on the spot — the equivalent of setting off the powder with the candle flame."

In just a few months, more than 200 prisoners passed through unmaskings at Gherla and the Communists thus increased the ranks of their faithful by 200. This is why the "progressive" education introduced by the Communists used the bludgeon instead of the bullet; why the killing of prisoners was forbidden: They did not seek to destroy individual men but the very human species itself, by inducing conditioned reflexes which turned men into creatures as obedient as robots and as ferocious as wounded tigers rabid with hatred of humanity. A dead tiger could not be used to destroy others.

More than 200 had passed through the unmaskings, and with the constant acceleration of the increasing numbers, it could have been predicted that within six months every inmate of the prison would have been thoroughly re-educated, if nothing untoward happened.

But something did happen, unexpectedly.

CHAPTER XXII

THE UNLEASHED DOGS

Without previous warning, on the evening of November 14, 1951, more than two years after the Pitesti experiment was begun, orders came to stop all unmaskings; not suddenly and abruptly but gradually, as a new phase was to be introduced. In other words, the phase of "violence" (i.e., beatings) was to be superseded by a new phase modeled to some extent on the method used at the canal, but with better surveillance. The unmaskings did not, as a matter of fact, end until February or March of the next year, when Colonel Zeller of the Securitate appeared. He came on an official mission, that of increasing production in the prison workshops, which meant sending as many prisoners as possible into them. To this end, most of the re-educators as well as the re-educated ended up having to go to work, and the whole prison population was shifted around. The reassignments to shop or group produced an entirely new mixing of students with other prisoners. This changed the atmosphere everywhere; it became indescribably poisoned.

The students were no longer in positions of command, yet their whole re-formed character was conditioned to control others through unmaskings. So, since the O.D.C.C.'s right to beat prisoners had been revoked, they took it upon themselves to inaugurate their own form of discipline at Gherla and, for the next two years they maintained, with the help of a naturally cruel administration, a state of terror unique in the annals of prison history.

Whether in workshop or cell, at the workbench or in the queue waiting for soup, in the lavatory or the shower, at any time, the re-educator would listen, all ears, to hear "what was being discussed," and would inform the administration promptly and pointedly so as to keep the reprisals as close to the spirit of unmaskings as possible.

Punishment for imaginary crimes was multiplied mercilessly. Incarceration, severe beatings, solitary confinement with minimal clothing, halving of food rations at the end of twelve hours of slave labor, the more severe regimen of being fed only once every three days — these constantly supplied a special section with more and more tuberculosis cases, and the cemetery with hundreds of bodies.

After the right of the re-educated to torment was revoked, the torturing was by Communists directly, and they used their best qualified individuals to do it, namely the prison's political officers and especially their chief, Lieutenant Avadanei.

As was normal Communist procedure, Director Gheorghiu was transferred to some other place and in his stead was brought in a new director, Captain Petre Goiciu. Formerly a tinsmith with the Romanian Railways in Galati, he was a Bulgarian notorious for his ferocity, which exceeded that of Maromet, the director of Jilava prison. As his assistant, and chief of production, Lieutenant Mihalcea, another degenerate maniac, was appointed.

This trio, Avadanei, Goiciu and Mihalcea ruled the prison for years, zealously executing orders and competing with one another for the highest marks in sadism, until they were rewarded with promotion in the Party hierarchy.

Around Christmas of 1951, Turcanu and ten of his collaborators were called to the prison's main office, where they were put in chains and sent away by van, no one

could imagine why. Everybody soon learned about their departure and thought the unmaskings at Gherla had either come to an end or reached their final stage so that Turcanu was no longer needed, and had perhaps been transferred to take up his long-awaited and much anticipated activities at Aiud. Turcanu had often bragged, "Soon I shall leave for Aiud, to accomplish the unmaskings of the leaders there."

He and his collaborators believed that they were being taken to Aiud, the next step up for them, as just reward for all their hard work. A man who traveled with them in the same prison van later related, "During the entire trip, all the way to Jilava, they all sang, and enjoyed themselves as if they were going home. When we drove by Aiud, and did not stop, they thought they were being taken to the Ministry of the Interior to be freed, remembering the promise by the Communists to reward them in consideration of their merits. Even at Jilava, during our first days there, Turcanu talked about novels and cowboy movies, and was relaxed, even radiant, and satisfied."

But one day, an officer from the Ministry came into the cell occupied by Turcanu and others.

"Why were you brought here, bandit?"

This was the first time since the beginning of unmaskings that Turcanu had been asked that insulting question.

"I was brought here to be freed," he answered, somewhat disgruntled.

"You bandit," growled the officer, "you were brought here to account for the crimes you committed in prison." And he left, slamming the door as he went.

The smug smile on Turcanu's face abruptly changed into an impotent grimace, and that was the last seen of him

by any survivors. From that moment on, for more than three years, as long as the investigation lasted in the Ministry on Victoriei Street, none but his inquisitors and their families saw his face.

Following his departure from Gherla, group after group of inmates, both tortured and the torturers, were taken to the Ministry of the Interior. As the re-educated continued to leave on these trips, the Gherla prisoners were sure that Turcanu must be engaged in the unmaskings at Aiud and was getting more collaborators from Gherla to step up the work. But after a while, some of those who had left began to return, and the strict orders by the Ministry not to utter a single word about the reason for their trip to Bucharest, was not respected by all of them. Little by little, almost everybody except those who fanatically believed in the practice of re-education by violence, began to realize that an investigation was going on. But no one really believed that punishment of Turcanu was conceivable; they did not understand Marxist dialectics, and so reasoned on the basis of their poor "reactionary" logic. So almost everyone remained sceptical, believing this was only a new trap. Besides, no sensational purging had taken place in the higher echelons of the Party, and nothing had changed at Gherla either, where terror still ruled and everything was proceeding according to the most perfect Communist pattern. Furthermore, as time went by, the terror intensified, punishments becoming more severe for infractions that no inmate had ever heard of. Lieutenant Avadanei was more and more brutal and the spirit of O.D.C.C. continued to dominate undiminished over the entire body of prisoners.

But on the dark depths of terror at Gherla, like a glimmering light, a reaction was beginning.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SECOND PHASE

The reaction began with prisoners who escaped unmasking because the process had been abandoned. Some, who had been fortunate enough to escape that hell, knew nothing of the unmasking technique and could not understand what really had happened. They knew nothing of the terrifying moulding of a "new man" or of the depth of the inflicted wounds, which many of us believed could never heal. Others, who had come into direct contact with students and personally experienced the nature of the monster-man that had been created over a period of five years, nevertheless asked themselves in astonishment when given time to think, "Can these things really be true?"

What constitutes a still greater paradox, however, is that a large number of victims, even among the students, could not see that they had been used as guinea pigs in an experiment. They regarded what had happened as nothing more than a passionate unleashing of the hate normally generated by the Party's ideology, or as a sort of drunkenness that broke the dams of reason when the Romanian Communists found themselves the beneficiaries of an undreamed-of victory.

The body of prisoners who had not been re-educated fell into several classes according to the way in which they viewed and judged the phenomenon.

The majority did not comprehend at all what it was all about; they perceived only the physical aspects, the beatings or overt wrongs done directly to them, and they judged the whole phenomenon in those terms, which after all were

of only secondary importance. Most of these prisoners came from uncultivated backgrounds and were by nature disposed to interpret everything only through what they could see with their own eyes. Their reasoning was quite simple: "Yes, I know they suffered; I myself was tortured during my investigation, and perhaps I wronged others. But why did the students not stop their nefarious activity immediately, when they were dispersed to workshops or work colonies? Why did they continue to serve the administration and harm other prisoners? Was it just to feather their own nests?" Discussion with these persons was quite difficult. Their attitude was a simple one, without subterfuge and not openly hostile. To the query, "What did you do to help the students come back to normal?" they would answer, "They were better educated than we and therefore better able to understand what was happening to them. How could I risk my skin when I knew that if I got close to one of them in good faith, he would immediately denounce me as an enemy of the administration, and then where would I be? I'd have to suffer the consequences!" And they would cite the example of workers who initially wanted to help but were betrayed.

A second class, small in number, was made up of those who, prior to their arrest, had generously collaborated with the Communists, hoping thus to be forgiven their membership in various political parties. In any discussion, these men deliberately created confusion between their own voluntary acts of collaboration and acts resulting from conditioned reflexes. Their reasoning was even more elementary than that of the simpler folk. "Man's soul is weak," they explained, "and subjected to fear and pressure, to hunger and the uncertainty of the morrow; it gives in; it cannot stand fast in a position of resistance when faced with and pressed by the forces in power."

There was yet a third class composed of individuals who all their lives had done nothing but seek positions of vantage. They posed as victims, with a thinly disguised intent of making themselves heroes of resistance, then, equipped with a record of imprisonment, they intended to make political hay out of it, in some cases, as *agents provocateurs*. This class avoided contact of any kind whatsoever with the world of the re-educated.

But a few of those incarcerated at Gherla — their numbers increased as time passed — tried to understand the phenomenon and the real motives for the experiment. They understood what you could call counter-re-education, adopting an attitude of uncompromising hostility toward everything that smacked in the least of the spirit of re-education. This brought them into conflict, not with the administration, as would normally have been the case, but with the re-educated students so strongly affected by the experiment that they seemed to have identified themselves with it. Any questioning of the new truths they professed with such fanaticism constituted a new torture almost unendurable — perhaps as painful morally as their unmaskings.

Endeavoring to clear a path toward re-establishment of contact with all the re-educated who had been consumed in the inferno at Gherla was a work that often was punished by incarceration — which, in a Romanian prison, meant confinement in a cubicle whose dimensions are such that the prisoner is forced to remain in a slightly stooped, standing position; he can neither sit nor lie down nor stretch up.

Thus much time had to pass before the atmosphere changed sufficiently to make living together in cells bearable, and reciprocal mistrust was dispelled. And in the meantime, the suffering caused by the re-educated was great.

CHAPTER XXIV

INHUMAN PENALTIES

The scene takes place in the Gherla prison yard, several months before Turcanu and his collaborators were transported to the Ministry of the Interior.

An inmate walks in an inner courtyard surrounded by the four walls of the buildings, an area of several hundred square yards. His hands clasped behind his back, his head bowed, he was deep in his own thoughts when some noise made him lift his head and look up. That instant, Martinus appeared in front of him.

"Bandit," said Martinus, "you look skyward, believing that the Americans will come from there?"

The inmate lowered his head without a word.

"Bandit, why do you lower your head? You look at the ground because you despise me, is that it?" A prison guard who stood nearby watched and smiled.

The inmate was ready to answer, since he did not know this fellow Martinus, did not know at the time what was going on on the fourth floor, and besides he did not like being addressed in this manner. But one of his cellmates who *did* know was able to restrain him with a look. In a cautious whisper he said, "Don't answer. This is the most powerful man here, below the director. He can do anything to you."

The inmate stared after the departing Martinus, who did not wait for an answer but wrote down the victim's

name to be scheduled for unmaskings. He had guessed by the inmate's silence and look that he was another "enemy of the working class"!

In the same courtyard, at the hour when the night-shift goes to work, two pallid-faced inmates were talking. A student slowly edges closer to eavesdrop on the pair. There is some racket in the yard, due to the unrest of several hundred prisoners who have been waiting for more than an hour for the roll call before going into the workshop. The two continued their conversation, unaware of the eavesdropper. The next day one of the two was ordered to report to the political officer. When he arrived, he was given a round of slaps in the face. Surprised, he asked why.

"Bandit," he was told, "you dare ask why! Do you not want to come to your senses? What were you discussing about Hitler last night as you stood in line waiting to go to work?"

After more slaps and kicks, more yelling and swearing, the desperate inmate frantically tried to recall everything they had talked about, and finally remembered that his friend had asked him why he looked so ill. He had answered that he had an *"icter recidivist,"* which is Romanian for "return of an attack of jaundice." The eavesdropper heard instead *Hitler redivivus* (Latin for "Hitler revived") and had reported to the political officer that the two had been discussing politics, which was forbidden, and hoping for the return of Hitler!

Any information reported by the re-educated was accepted as absolutely the truth and the denounced inmate had not the slightest possibility of defending himself successfully. It is not that the political directorate of the prison believed that the re-educated ones never lied, but

whether their reports were true or not, they provided an excuse for punishment, which is all the officers were after anyway. They considered each inmate a personal enemy who deserved nothing but extermination, by any convenient means, but preferably through routine procedures.

So long as the entire shop and technical office leadership was entrusted to the students, the oppression by the administration was not exercised directly, but through student intermediaries. They were the ones directly responsible for whatever went on in the workshops, the quality and quantity of products, for discipline and for output. Whoever did not show enough zeal was considered an opportunist, indifferent to being a leader, and consequently sent "to work down below," which is the Communist term for being downgraded from a function, but here really meant to be sent down to work under infernal conditions.

Large numbers of the re-educated could not be employed as administrators because, contrary to the prevailing bureaucratic practice, the positions were few. Those students who did not excel in re-education practices were sent to work side by side with the rest of the prisoners. And in order to get promoted to a desk job, which some of their colleagues held, they almost killed themselves working, exceeding the norms by truly phenomenal percentages. Other workers began to exceed their quotas, not so much to get into the good graces of the political officer as to be left in peace by the re-educated.

Thus began a hellish competition. The "norm-setters" had a very special mission: to observe the quota production as closely as possible and report within twenty-four hours any increase. Next day, the increased production became the norm, and the cycle began anew. It was not too long before the initial quota was exceeded by 250%, which then

became the new minimum quota! To show you how difficult work became under these conditions, I shall give one example out of thousands that occurred in Gherla prison.

In the winter of 1952, an order of tubs for washing clothes was received from the military. The riveting of the sheet metal lining the tub on the inside was initially timed at 92 minutes. A prisoner was expected to put out eight units in his twelve hours of work. Three months later the re-educated reduced the time to 30 minutes, a speed-up of 300%. When I was put on shop work, my quota was 28 tubs in 12 hours. During the summer of 1953, this was increased to 38 in 12 hours. A worker who riveted 10 tubs in one shift during the winter was considered as exceeding the quota; by summer, if he did 35, he was punished for not meeting his quota, and put on half-food rations.

* * * * *

The student informers and the sadistic administrators cooperated efficiently in keeping always full the incarceration cells, the black room, and the isolation holes — the three ordinary means of punishment. I shall describe them for you.

Incarceration cells. These were tall, narrow, box-like structures about 6 feet high and 16 inches square. A prisoner was forced to stand in one for from eight to fifteen days, except when he was taken out for work each day. If, as frequently happened, the numbers of prisoners exceeded the number of box-stalls available, two prisoners at a time were squeezed into each vertical coffin and locked in. To force their bodies in, the guard had to use his fists, kicks, and much swearing before getting the door finally pushed tight enough against their bodies to be locked.

By the end of the first two days, the prisoners' legs turned into stumps, with no feeling in them, and the body, due to lack of mobility, restricted circulation, and the kidneys' inability to function normally, took on a queer shape. But this form of punishment ran its normal course, as I have said, in from eight to fifteen days, with prisoners extracted for the 12-hour work period each day. In graver cases, however, the director decided the victim should spend all his time, day and night, in the box except for two trips to the lavatory.

The worst feature, perhaps, was that these boxes were set directly on concrete flooring so that in sub-zero weather the wretches locked within were turned into frozen mummies.

Hardly any one was able to pass twelve hours at a stretch in one of these boxes without passing out. This was caused partly by a lack of air. The only source of air provided was a small opening of a few square inches in one side, but if there were two men in the box, the back of one covered up the hole, making breathing more and more difficult. Fortunately, as more boxes were built by the prisoners themselves, the boards were loosely fitted with a space of one to three millimeters left between them through negligence, or through . . . foresight, allowing a little air to reach the victims.

When all boxes were full to capacity (and never in the three years of the O.D.C.C. terror were they unoccupied, not even for a few hours), the prisoners were crammed into a black room.

The Black Room. Every prison in Romania had one or more. The rooms were called "black" because they had no windows, air or light, with only one door into the corridor of the prison. About nine feet square, they were

designed to hold two prisoners, but director Goiciu would put as many as thirty or even more unfortunates into this small space. Prisoners were stripped to underwear and if necessary crushed one over the other in this permanently vitiated atmosphere, with but a single uncovered bucket, no bed, no blanket, no water, nothing to lie on but the cement floor or the bodies of those no longer capable of standing up. Nobody could sleep. If in winter this crowding was somehow bearable because the bodies warmed each other, in the summer it became an indescribable inferno.

No water was allowed in this black room, on orders of the director, and the stench in the place became unbearable. In order to get to the bucket an almost impossible effort was necessary and consequently many renounced it. And terrible scenes took place in this writhing mass of suffering men. In order not to urinate on the floor, out of a sense of decency, the prisoners actually fought to get places near the bucket, even though there the stench was unbearable. Summers brought on an endemic attack of boils, winters caused pneumonia that became galloping tuberculosis. The spirit of irony among the prisoners was yet alive however. They christened the two places of torture *"mon caprice"* (the incarceration box) and *"mon jardin"* (the black room).

Isolation. A third form of punishment, more grim and more dangerous than the others, was the regimen of isolation. An entire floor of the old prison was reserved for those whose guilt was considered too great for a sentence of only ten days in an incarceration box, or three weeks in the black room. Isolation carried a sentence of three months or longer, and though the prisoners were apparently separated from the floor reserved for those dying of tuberculosis, the brooms for housekeeping, the barrels of

water, and the clothing to be laundered, were all thrown together so that germs could be spread freely over both floors. The isolation prisoners were permitted a walk of 15 minutes every day; the rest of the time the yard was used for the sick "who had more need of fresh air." This deliberate mixing of the sick and the healthy was nothing other than premeditated homicide. But who could make even a gesture of protest?

Nevertheless, knowing the great risk to their health, the prisoners committed premeditated acts of gross disobedience in order to be sent to isolation; at least they could sleep or lie down all day there. But things changed. A re-educated inmate was responsible for ending this prisoners' paradise. While in isolation, he reported to the director that prisoners coming there did so on their own initiative, in order to get out of working in the shop. Immediately, food rations were cut in half, and to the most recalcitrant, cut to one quarter; beatings for no reason were initiated, on invented charges; and because the political officers were accountable to nobody there, they turned the torturing of prisoners into a daily ritual of entertainment.

The contribution of the re-educated was to supply a constant stream of occupants for the incarceration box, the black room and the isolation floor. Of their victims so punished, more than 75% contracted tuberculosis, and ended in the cemetery. The director permitted the prison doctor to transfer a prisoner to the T.B. section only after blood appeared in his sputum. But by then his fate was sealed.

I shall give you one example.

A youth of about twenty years named Onac, a peasant from the Bihor region, had been condemned because he

"wanted to overthrow the regime," but, having the strength and the pride, it seemed, of the very mountains where he was reared, all the harassment of the administration, all the provocations of the re-educated could not budge him. His determined posture made him hated by the stool-pigeons and he told them off at every opportunity; while they in turn kept their eyes on him, looking for the first opportunity to denounce him to the director.

One day, as they walked toward the shop, this opportunity came. Onac, to again show his contempt for one of the informants near him, turned to one of his friends saying, as he pointed up to the corridor bell, "This bandit ought to be hanged by the bell's tongue, for he is one of the worst." Since Onac was imitating the manner and language of the re-educated, the informant could see that they were talking about him and reported Onac's remark in this twisted fashion:

"The director is going to be hanged on the bell's tongue when the Americans arrive!!"

Without any further investigation, Onac was given 15 days in the box. It was winter. Dressed only in shirt and underpants, he was there only a few days before contracting pulmonary congestion and the doctor, also a prisoner, prescribed the available drugs and wanted him sent to the infirmary. But instead, the director threw him into the black room, where his congestion turned into pneumonia, then into galloping tuberculosis. In less than two months after his incarceration, mountain-strong Onac met his death. When it was known he would die, he was moved into a cell serving as a morgue in the yard of the tubercular prisoners. Here he was visited by the student who caused his plight. The remorseful student, face to face with the dying man, and kneeling, tears in his eyes, asked for for-

giveness. But the dying young giant now wasted, only stared at him, without a word.

He died the next morning, a sad and foggy morning, the kind of which there are many in prisons. His corpse was left on the cement floor of the morgue where he died, for two more days. In the evening then, after prisoners were locked in their cells, amidst a heavy silence in the courtyard, a guard and two common law prisoners carried him to his grave — not in the nearby cemetery, but on the bank of the River Somes, in a spot where only prisoners were thrown. He was denied a Christian burial. The hole had been dug that morning but by evening was full of water because the river level had risen, soaking the banks up to the grass roots. When they threw him in, the water splashed out on the bearers — like a last protest against injustice by what was left of this gallant boy.

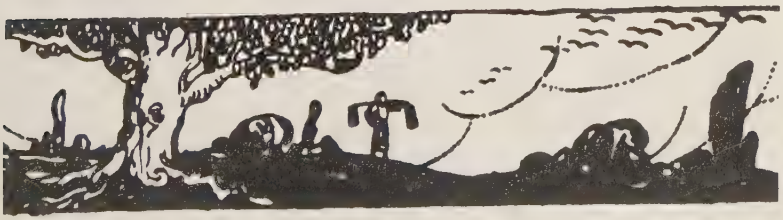
Onac's case was not unusual or remarkable. Every prisoner who survives will have an Onac of his own to tell about. More than one — perhaps thousands; the differences are only of nuance. The cause of their deaths, however, will be always the same: they were the victims of other victims.

* * * * *

It was summer of 1953. Together with us in a cell at Gherla was, among other prisoners, a student from the Polytechnic Institute. The noon meal was just served, with everybody holding his mess-pan (there were no tables in the prison), when another student, who was the last to come in, said jokingly, "With the last transport yesterday, Turcanu was brought back." His words fell into the silence like a bombshell; the three students who shared this cell lowered their mess-pans, seized by panic, the one from Polytechnic being so frightened he dropped his to the floor

and just stood there bewildered. His face became all of a sudden waxlike and he was incapable of uttering a single word; it seemed his entire being was seized with a weakness that paralyzed even his thought. All three boys looked at each other, waiting it seemed for something to happen to show them it wasn't true. Actually, it was not true at all, and the jokester said so. But this did not help matters much. For three days and more, in spite of the endemic hunger they suffered as prisoners, the three students could eat nothing. At every slightest slamming of a door they shuddered and looked up in terror, expecting Turcanu to enter and resume the unmaskings.

Later on, one of them told me that they were so terrified because they were just beginning to emerge from the madness of Pitesti and realized that the O.D.C.C. would never forgive an abandonment of the "principle of re-education." Several months after this occurrence, one of the students with whom I had discussed problems in general as well as what had happened to them, warned me that if unmaskings were resumed we had better hide nothing we told each other; that as far as he was concerned, he would do just that. "For you," he said, "as a matter of fact, it will of course be much easier, because you know nothing of the reality of the experiment proper, while I will be considered a traitor."



CHAPTER XXV

THE POWER OF COMPASSION

The prisoners at Gherla who wanted to understand the psychological phenomenon represented by the re-educated, and to help the victims, if possible, had to proceed warily. They had to circumvent the opposition of their fellows, some of whom, fearful of risks that might involve them, tried to prevent any effort or contact, while others, who had experienced nothing like unmaskings, thought the re-educated must be all irredeemably evil by nature or else mere weaklings. One had also to avoid attracting the notice of the administration, particularly the political officers who kept a very close eye on the students' activities, and finally, the re-educated in themselves represented an awesome danger. Extreme caution was called for; in fact, each man worked on his own so that, if he were denounced, others would not be exposed and the true extent of the action would not be suspected.

One of the greatest difficulties was finding re-educated individuals who would not immediately report any remark to the political officers.

The element on which the Communists normally relied in dealing with political prisoners was a breaking down of the prisoners' faith, loyalty and trust in their country. For this reason, they kept the political prisoners generally isolated from news of events within as well as outside Romania, because any favorable news, especially of events outside the Iron Curtain, had a remarkable effect in keeping hope alive in a large proportion of the prisoners. The

institution of unmaskings, however, stopped all leakage of information from outside, and the political officers saw to it that all news, filtered through their stooges to the prisoners, was always favorable to the socialist front. Such fabricated news, designed to poison the minds of those hearing nothing else, was repeated insistently month after month, until its details became axiomatic. All were convinced that Soviet Russia was preparing for the great world revolution that would soon conclusively establish Communist rule over the entire globe. If there was any doubt of this, the officers used as their best argument a recounting of events which purported to be proof of the defeatist policy of the West.*

As to the situation within Romania, the students knew that collectivisation was already accomplished and generally accepted by the populace, either through fear, opportunism or belief that it was an improvement. The general feeling was that at least a part of the "injustices of the past" were being alleviated by the Communists, and that in any case everything was tending toward stabilization of a new order too powerful to be resisted.

The prisoners, furthermore, could not learn the true state of affairs in other prisons, and they mostly assumed that unmaskings went on in all as they did at Gherla, and perhaps even outside the prisons too. When unmaskings were discontinued, they thought this was only a temporary measure and the practice would be resumed later on, so that everybody would have to undergo the experiment and have his character so modified as to be unrecognizable. This conviction was so deeply rooted in their minds that

*It must be remembered that Bacu wrote in 1957, when there were still some careful observers who believed that there was a "free world" whose governments really tried to "contain Communism" or, at least, wished to see the spread of the inhuman tyranny inhibited. (*Tr.*)

much later, when almost no one lived any longer under the imperium of conditioned reflexes, a group that was being transported back from some lead mines to Gherla and saw the window shutters of the prison closed, immediately concluded that unmaskings had naturally been resumed and they were to be punished for some "betrayal." The somewhat tragi-comic part of it was that those who were most frightened were not the students, but the ones who had earlier accused the re-educated students of cowardice. The students themselves expressed no fear, only a mute resignation, and acceptance of implacable fatality, should the unmaskings be resumed — which they were not, as it turned out.

Of all Romanian prisons, the most difficult situation from some points of view was at Gherla. The prison at Aiud did not have enough re-educated students from the canal to control the entire prison population, and at the canal there was a sizeable group who had a chance to revert toward their normal state because they had come in contact with a group of former army officers, mainly Legionaries, who had been sent direct to the canal from prison-camps in Russia, and had thus escaped unmaskings themselves. Also, the situation there had been definitely stabilized following the changes brought about after the death of Doctor Simionescu. Only about ten students still maintained the position of the re-educated, but were kept completely isolated from the other prisoners and could thus do no harm.

So, since at Aiud prison there were not enough of the re-educated to be in control, and the transferred prisoners did not find Turcanu there after all, or even a program of unmaskings, some students began to experience a moral recovery. This was partly made possible by the presence

at Aiud of political prisoners who had been prominent personalities and influential members of their respective parties, and who did not fear the consequences of exercising a strong moral influence over the incoming students. They assumed that this would be taken for granted inside prison walls as it had been outside, and they were right. The staunchest elements of the Legionary Movement and of the National Peasant Party were represented at Aiud.

The situation, however, at the three lead mines, Baia Sprie, Cavnic, and Valea Nistrului, was somewhat different. The pressure exercised by the re-educators was not great, for no administrator ever went down into the mines; it was not safe. And an "accident" could happen anytime, and who would know in the depths of the mines how a huge boulder happened to fall on a stool pigeon? There were no safety devices or precautions in the mines and accidents could and did happen very easily and frequently. So affairs down there were left largely up to the prisoners in those extermination pits. The re-educated thus presented no problem to the miners.

But, as I have said, at Gherla it was different. Here, the political directorate took the legacy of re-education seriously, partly because the technical office, composed of engineering students, contained several re-educated members of notorious reputation. Octavian Tomuta, a senior at the Polytechnical School at Bucharest, as devoted to the administration as he was capable, was head of the planning office and responsible for the overall production, a sort of technical director. Every section was headed by a chief who had been re-educated, though officially these posts were entrusted to some non-commissioned officers of the militia. Eugen Munteanu was in charge of "labor and wages," which gave him the opportunity to penalize in his

own way: withholding from the "bandit" prisoners the pittance to which they were entitled for a month's labor. Duta, Bucoveanu, Costachescu, Danila, were eight more ears for the administration. To this group could be added former Communists now condemned because, during Antonescu's administration, they chose the role of informers, sending their comrades to prison or concentration camps. All these groups learned that there were some among the prisoners who were trying to help re-educated students recover their former selves, and they sought by all means to hinder this activity by sending those so engaged (when discovered through informers) into isolation.

In the spring of 1953 a small number of re-educated students began to break away from the herd, seeking to regain their equilibrium; but some of them turned informer again and as a result additional prisoners ended up in isolation. The effort would have resulted in complete failure, or at least any success would have come much later, had not an extraordinary event taken place in the spring of the same year, namely, the death of Stalin, and with it the modification of Russian policy toward the occupied countries, at least on the economic level.

Through the dissolution of various Sovroms (*Soviet-Roma*nian exploitation companies in which Romanians put up the capital and raw materials, and Russians took half the profits), the Danube-Black Sea canal plans were disrupted. It had already been rumored that the budget allocated for the entire job had been used up when only a fourth of the work was finished, and that the various geological surveys had been done so superficially and unreliably that many repeat probings, and other unforeseen obstacles resulted in greatly increased costs. But the lack of finances was not the only reason the canal was given up;

the Russian technicians were withdrawn when Sovroms were dissolved, and there were no Romanian engineers to take their places. Almost all of them had either been condemned to prison or murdered. And so, work at the canal was virtually paralyzed.

It also happened just at this time that the World Festival of so-called "Democratic Youth" was opened and the canal compounds of forced labor stretching along the Bucharest-Constanta Railway* constituted a thorny problem for the regime. To disclose this expanse of wretched camps and dying slaves to foreign visitors traveling to the seashore by train would reveal the true nature of Communist "democracy," and give the lie to Soviet propaganda.

The "Ministry of the Canal" was therefore obliged to effect a hasty evacuation of all prisoners from the area and into the northern part of the country, where they would be hidden from the eyes of the curious. (Three years later, a migration in the opposite direction was to take place during the Hungarian uprising,† when political prisoners were evacuated by night into the interior, remote from the Hungarian frontier.)

After going over the files hastily, the administration sent, in a matter of a few days, almost 2000 prisoners to Aiud and Gherla, in sealed cattle cars. Those considered most dangerous to the regime were initially slated for Aiud and included some National Peasant Party members and particularly Legionary Youth members; but they ended up, along with the 800 already scheduled to go there, in Gherla prison. Among the 800 were 150 students who had undergone unmasking at Pitesti but who, while at the canal, had

*I.e., that portion between Cerna-Voda on the east bank of the Danube, and Constanta. (*Tr.*)

†See Ch. XXX.

experienced recovery. Thus the ranks of those who were trying to snatch the re-educated from the clutches of the administration swelled all of a sudden, and efforts with re-educated students became open and aggressive.

The administration reacted accordingly. Incarceration boxes and the isolation section of the prison were filled to overflowing. Director Goiciu and Sebesteny, the new political officer, imposed penalties on prisoners so fast that facilities to take care of them were quite inadequate. Complicating the problem was that, as a result of a new directive from the Ministry of the Interior, all prisoners who had come from the canal were taken to work in the shop. Controlling them became impossible. Informers for the administration were openly threatened by youths from the canal, and even by their former colleagues in unmasking, and they began to get scared. A wave of disobedience that would have been inconceivable a month earlier led to failure in fulfilling work quotas. To the newcomers, Gherla's working conditions seemed infernal by comparison with those at the canal, even though they knew several thousand of their fellow prisoners had died exhausted there.

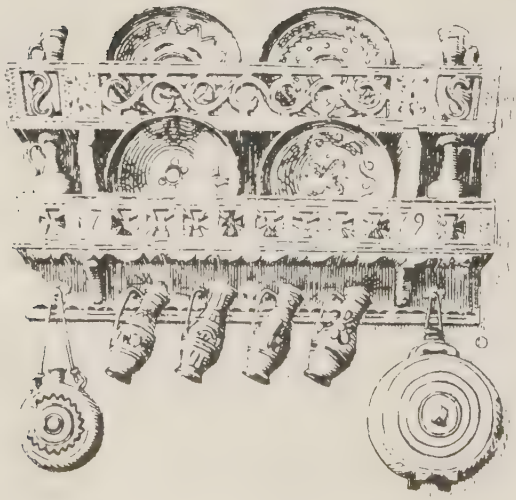
The severe measures taken and the penalties imposed by the administration subdued somewhat the enthusiasm of the newcomers, but the inevitable occurred. The wall of treachery with which the re-educated had surrounded themselves was shaken to its foundations. From now on, students engaged one another in open discussions, often argumentative, and little by little the ranks of those awakening to a new life swelled. Apathy and stubborn resistance changed gradually to a warm receptivity. The soul's depth, long hidden and inaccessible, now began to awaken and break the chains of terror.

And, at this strangely opportune moment, towards the end of August 1953, over 200 Legionary "campers" were brought from the Ocnele-Mari prison and added their contribution to the struggle for the students' recovery. The "campers" were prisoners who had been arrested but not tried and sentenced, and prisoners whose terms had expired years before, many of them having been thrown into prison during Antonescu's administration. They were shifted out of Ocnele-Mari at this time because that prison was now to be used for officers of the Ministry of the Interior being arrested and sentenced following various purges of the ranks of the Communist Party. Many of these "campers" helped in rehabilitation with enthusiasm as they found many old friends among the students at Gherla.

Toward the end of 1953, the question of re-education was discussed freely in the cells, not only between non-re-educated and re-educated, but among the prisoners in general, with a view to clarifying the phenomenon per se and establishing a general position with respect to it.

The reaction of the administration, very vigorous at first, slowly became weaker; it could no longer stem the current of opposition, and the intrigues and uncertainties that followed the liquidation of the first group of the Communist Central Committee made the administrators worried and anxious for their own future. The hesitations of 1953 and even more those of 1954 were fatal. The experiment began to die. Penalties were imposed more often than not as a kind of reflex action from hate and futility rather than in any hope of regaining control, of maintaining the impossible. And in losing their source of information through defection of their informers, the administration lost control over the soul and the thought of the prisoners.

It is true that they tried harsher and harsher penalties for the students, but the results were just opposite to what they expected. The re-educated accepted their punishments as a sort of necessity for the re-establishment of a disrupted equilibrium, and also a kind of penance. The severe regimen and reappearance of chains in the special cells, became thus a certain stimulant, a verification of budding life just beginning. Communist oppression and brutality was again triggering a natural reaction.



CHAPTER XXVI

REUNIONS

Though many friendships had been formed among anti-Communist fighters in local organizations or in political groups, many were broken in the course of this tragedy, especially those formed between students and non-students. In contrast with normal times, when every political party was organized into groups along social or professional lines, the "illegal" anti-Communist groups drew from all classes. Social differences were submerged in the common fight for liberty. That is why a kind of amalgam resulted, in which all individual differences were melted away, leaving the only thing that mattered: the love of country and freedom. But through the forced submission of students and workers to the unmasking experiment, this bond was broken; so that now, when circumstances again made it possible for men to meet again, a way had to be found for re-establishing communication between them, even within the same cell.

Relaxed tensions following abandonment of the policy of re-education naturally did not bring the students back to participation in normal prison life. They were a species apart, and conscious of the profound differences that separated them from their fellow inmates. Thus there could be no contact between former friends, no approach of one to the other, no means of communication. The terrible mutation of re-education separated them as effectively as an impenetrable wall.

Breaching the wall could be attempted only by those who had been able to maintain their souls intact and had, fur-

thermore, a compassion which they wished to share with those so desperately in need of it.

In order to make an initial approach even possible, one had to study and understand thoroughly the psychopathic phenomenon as a whole, and then try to make some aperture through which to reach the consciousness of the submerged personality without deepening his alienation. That was extremely difficult, and one had to proceed with great caution. I shall outline the way several close friends and I tried to do this.

At first, when the atmosphere was heavy with suspicion, we would approach the re-educated persons working with us and pretend to agree with them, just to get a conversation started. When the climate seemed ameliorated, we tried to re-establish their self-confidence, but make no reference whatever to unmaskings, not even through a remote hint. Gradually, slowly, the concepts and values that had been destroyed by the re-educators were revived by a kind of inverse process as individuals were shown an affectionate sympathy and understanding of their suffering, and were convinced of our desire to do the right thing. Many times such conversations had to be continued for a long time before we could ascertain just what guilt was searing the soul of an individual, but as soon as we were convinced that our interlocutor was prepared to bear it, we initiated a discussion which included him as a guilty party. We then could proceed to probe the true problem, that of determining *who* was really responsible, personally responsible, not only for the crimes committed but for the initiation of the fearsome experiment in the first place.

The majority of the students had had a faith so strong that it survived deep within them in spite of every attempt to destroy it, and when circumstances made it possible, it

re-appeared as if from hibernation and proved to be the determining factor in recovery. We are concerned here only with students who were victims before becoming torturers or simple informers for the political officers. The other persons, who were sent into the prisons as tools of the Ministry of the Interior or the Communist Party itself, or who became *willing* stooges of the regime, must be left to the justice that inflexibly punishes crime.

The resurrection of the values which had been superseded by re-education was not in itself too difficult a task, as frequently a simple stimulation sufficed to impel the person back to his former equilibrium. But one real obstacle, very hard to surmount, was the haunting fear, locked into every fiber of the unmasked victim, that any day the re-education terror might be resumed. Life inside the prison did nothing to dispel that fear. To be convincing, an argument that the terror was ended had to be based on evidence from the outside, even from the course of political events outside the country.

To encourage a feeling that events might be changing things for us in prison, we used all kinds of information gleaned from newly-arrived prisoners, or through the good will of prison guards innocent of "class-struggle" theories. Under the circumstances, prisoners put their own interpretation on the various bits of information and fitted them to their own wishful thinking. Whether their interpretations did or did not correspond to reality did not worry us in the least. The essential thing was that they allayed the fears not only of the re-educated, but also our own, for we could never really dismiss from our own minds the possibility of an instauration of the Pitesti experiment, having observed the oscillation in prison of the various forms of terror from maximum to minimum and back, with

no apparent relationship to political events in the country. So we cannot be blamed for thinking anything was possible.

In addition to alleviating that fear of the re-educated, we had somehow to destroy also their conviction that Communist Russia was invincible — Russia where, as indeed in any country under Communist domination, one has no means of ascertaining what facts, if any, lie behind official claims and declarations. But the re-educated had lost all power of discernment. Their only truth was that which was decreed by the Communist Party's official paper, and the students had no other source by which to judge it. So, attempts to refute with reasoning and argument the lies that had paralyzed their ability to think were worse than useless. (This can also be seen in the Western world, where various co-existentialists, or "useful idiots," are products of the same intoxication.) We found that a well-placed joke or witticism accomplished more good than an hour of argument.

A soul that has been submerged for years has more need for a warm word, we found, than for logical explanation; like a plant kept in the dark, it needs the sun more than nourishment.

CHAPTER XXVII

ENDLESS ISOLATION

Prison life was filled with work in the shops, with discussions between students or with other re-educated prisoners, with constant hunger, and with fear of the administration. Some prisoners counted the days, others did not. But here again we were taken by surprise, and the monotony of prison life was broken by a typically illogical proceeding by the Communist management.

On the fifth of December, the day preceding St. Nicholas' Day, 1953, I was working in the tinsmith shop located in the yard of the main building. When we were let out for lunch, those who worked in the technical bureau went out with us and I had managed to gain the confidence of one of them, a former pupil in a trade school and rightly considered one of the most dangerous informers among the re-educated prisoners. Stopping for a moment near me and looking around to be sure he was not observed by any fellow informer, he whispered, "A great screening of the prisoners is in the making and all those considered 'bandits' will be confined to their cells for the whole day. Only those considered inoffensive or devoted will go out to work."

"Where did you get this information?" I asked.

"From Lieutenant Mihalcea."

"What do you know about me, did you see the list?"

He did not answer, but only bent his head.

The next morning, St. Nicholas' Day itself, just a little before opening the doors to let us out for work, Eugen

Munteanu, the real head of the labor and wages office, entered our cell and announced that only those hearing their names called out should step out and go to work. Mine was not called. This measure was not a clear-cut punishment; we were locked in the cell, but nothing further was done to us! So those of us whose names had not been called considered it a great favor, especially now that winter was coming. Most of those left in the cell had arrived at Gherla from the canal labor camp or other prisons after unmaskings had been abandoned — in other words, they had not undergone the experiment. The majority of the re-educated prisoners, however, continued to work in the shops.

The Ministry's orders in reality had provided that all work was to stop completely in order to reorganize the prison internally, but since various jobs for the military still had to be completed (we worked exclusively for the Military units of the Ministry of the Interior), it could not be stopped. Besides, we had ten vans for transporting prisoners under construction for the Ministry's own use and these had to be delivered by February, 1954. So, though many were idled, quite a few had to be left working.

The transition of this state of idleness was accompanied, as was to be expected, by transfers to other cells, and by deprivation of walks, of mattresses, and, naturally, of the meager food supplement given us when we were working. But this situation also did not last very long. Only two months later another shift was made, this time of a more severe nature.

It was the morning of February 20, 1954, and still dark, when everybody, whether working or not, was routed out and assembled in the lobby of the prison's first floor. In between floors netting had been suspended and on it placed

hundreds of yards of straw matting, so that no one could see to the other floors. We could not imagine what was going to happen. A large number of surly officers and militia sergeants, some of them new and unknown, walked among us, forbidding any kind of talking. Accompanying them was Director Goiciu and the two political officers, both Hungarian, carrying a pile of papers on which presumably were written the prisoners' names.

The atmosphere was unusually tense. A fear which seemed to be contagious could be seen on all faces. Even the faces of the re-educated prisoners were contorted as if reflecting there the terror of their souls. The terror that was on the face of the student in cell X when the joke about Turcanu's coming back to Gherla was told, was now to be seen on the faces of all the re-educated prisoners. I happened to be standing by a student with whom I was on friendly terms. He was one who had experienced a recovery from unmasking. Taking advantage of a moment of lack of vigilance on the part of the officer who was near us, he passed into my palm a very beautiful cigarette holder carved out of an ox horn. Then he asked me the question I had anticipated but for which I had no answer:

"Do you think the unmaskings are going to be resumed?"

What could I say? I tried in two or three words to calm him, maybe rather to calm myself. The approach of an officer prevented, however, any further speech.

More than two hours went by with us still standing around in the lower hall that morning and with nothing happening, except that certain non-commissioned officers from the main prison office came in, reported something to the director in a low voice, and left again. Some time after seven a.m., a strange roll call of prisoners was made, names being called in alphabetical order. Then, in accord-

ance with their "political hue" as shown by their dossiers and reflected in the length of their sentences, the prisoners were divided into two groups, one composed of those with sentences of ten years or less, the other of those with longer terms. No importance was attached to type of punishment, as some in each group had been officially condemned to hard labor, while others only to correctional confinement.

Thus, on February 20, 1954 began the permanent isolation which even today is in force and which constitutes one of the most terrible methods of slowly killing the soul and wrecking the nerves.

One by one, in the order in which they had been called, the prisoners disappeared up the stairs that morning, to which floors we could not tell, where officers were waiting to lock them up in their cells. From that day on I was not to see again many of my prison comrades and good friends; and I did not see them again, even though for several years I lived under the same roof with them. Many it will be impossible ever to see again for they will have preceded me into the Great Beyond.

I was sent, along with about 35 or 36 others, to a cell on the fourth floor. Almost half my companions were re-educated prisoners! When we got to the cell, we all tried to find a spot close to the window or to a friend, or lacking this, closer to an acquaintance. In such moments of uncertainty, every prisoner tries to be close to someone he can trust, under the illusion that perhaps this time it will do him some good! Each one, when he found a place, put down beside him the handful of clothing yet remaining after years of imprisonment.

The shock of this maneuver had brusquely and profoundly impressed those who had passed through unmask-

ings. Even a large number of those who had begun to snap out of the lethargy into which they had sunk recoiled abruptly, adopting a "wait and see" attitude, with the obvious intention of sliding back to the side of those who had steadfastly maintained themselves as "convinced" re-educated.

Even on that first day of isolation, St. Nicholas' Day in December 1953, many of the re-educated students, who had been willing to discuss things and had begun to shed the "re-educated" posture, were stimulated to reconsider. Those who had taken part in unmaskings, particularly as heads of committees, thinking that a new period of re-education was about to begin, prepared for work! As a starter, they began by threatening former colleagues who were now openly opposed to a resumption of re-education. But to show you how well-conditioned reflexes still worked, even after two years, let me cite the following:

The student A.B., who proved himself a decent enough fellow after unmaskings were abandoned, and denounced no one, staying in the good graces of the administration by working like a slave, changed on December 6th, suddenly denouncing his own uncle, who had been permitted to visit him just a few days before!

"Why did you denounce him, when nothing justified you whatsoever?" I asked him later, when he told me about it.

"If unmaskings were to begin again," he replied, "the first accusation against me, which would be sufficient in itself to put me again through the whole works, would be that I had not denounced anybody. So, after December 6, being convinced that unmaskings would soon re-commence, I began taking my own precautionary measures."

After February, the more severe isolation period began, when political officers punished the slightest offences, pris-

oners who had been through unmaskings were sure the system was being re-instated. In our cell, on the very first day, for instance, the viciousness of the political officer, Sebesteny, proved itself on the back of the cell leader he himself had chosen! Just because at the time he entered the cell, the leader did not call "Attention!" loud enough, Sebesteny punished him with 24 hours in leg-irons and hand-cuffs in the notorious incarceration box. When the victim returned next day to the cell, his hands were covered with blue stripes and both legs were bleeding from the irons.

His return triggered a dramatic development. Some of the prisoners were ready then and there to re-constitute a re-education committee within the cell. This did happen in other cells where the re-educated were in the majority with no one to oppose them and rally the non-re-educated prisoners to establish order. But our cell was more evenly divided, and three groups were formed almost from the start. The two extremes were represented by the Pitesti group and those openly opposed to them; in the center were the timorous ones, who did not take sides but awaited developments. At heart they were with us, but they were afraid of betraying themselves to the re-educated.

The first three or four days we spent in mutual surveillance. We were waiting to see what the administration's next move would be, and the re-educated were waiting for a go-ahead signal from the political officer to re-commence the unmaskings! Since we were familiar with the sequence of the unmaskings, we decided that should they be resumed, in no case would we let ourselves be caught off-guard, and that we would defend ourselves even to the death, committing suicide if possible. So we kept in a group in one corner by the window, with our backs protected by the walls.

Our taut nerves were close to snapping. Every time the door opened, all eyes turned that way, but for different reasons! Expecting the command, we prepared.

When we could see the administration was limiting itself to keeping internal order, needless to say with an extremely severe regimen, we decided to take advantage of the situation by taking the initiative. We started by approaching first the timorous group, which we needed to add to ours in order to match the number of re-educated prisoners. Since they were afraid to talk with us, we contrived to discuss the situation so they could overhear us but did not need to respond. In a matter of a few days most of them appeared to be more favorable toward our group. We sarcastically called these discussions "ARLUS meetings," which was a direct allusion to the Communist propaganda organization camouflaged under the title, "The Association for the Strengthening of Cultural Ties with the Soviet Union." These "ARLUS" discussions were not at all in a serious vein, but made up of many jokes about Russians, putting the Communists to ridicule on the one hand, and on the other to show that we were not afraid of the re-educators.

The result was quite positive. We had known even before imprisonment that jokes with a political slant hostile to Communism were quite effective, and that if anything could keep hostility toward the Russian invaders alive it was the anecdote. The danger that humor represented to the Party was recognized, as witness the extensive repressive measures taken against it; there were Romanians sent to prison for ten years only because they told a joke ridiculing Communism.

After a while the situation changed: there were now only two groups in our cell. The timorous had become

courageous and joined our open discussion before the entire cell. Among the re-educated whom I knew was a Hungarian, who reported to Messaros, the political officer, everything that went on in our cell. Why steps were not taken to stop us or investigate remains a question. Only once, when I was called out as a result of my admitting to a guard that a chess game found in the cell was mine, he gave me to understand that he knew everything being discussed in the cell, and it would be better for me not to fall into his hands. Upon my denying it, he even told me the name of my denouncer.

Among the re-educated in our cell, the most dangerous at that time was one Gheorghe Calciu, a former medical student nicknamed *"L'Eminence grise** of Director Goiciu." He was one of the most devoted and determined products of re-education, and to some extent he took Turcanu's place. But in the cell, he was not at all on the defensive, as were the others in his group, he was in fact relaxed, almost jovial. He went so far, one afternoon, as to recite the well-known poem by Makarenko, the "Pedagogical Poem!"†

Without going into the cultural value of this verse, the very fact that he would dare to mention a Soviet writer in the cell, even one very much appreciated by the Party,

*A sardonic allusion to Father Joseph, the outwardly austere and unassuming, but wily and feared, confidential coadjutor of Cardinal Richelieu. Romanians translate this "gray eminence" as "The Brain." (*Tr.*)

†Anton Semenovich Makarenko (1888-1939), a Soviet poetaster, was best known for his "Pedagogical Poem," a dreary effusion in Russian verse filled with the factitious (and fatuous) sentiment that characterizes all the "literature" manufactured for the Bolsheviks as part of "proletarian culture." The "Pedagogical Poem" was first published in 1935, and has been frequently reprinted in Russia. The humor in the reference to Turcanu in the next paragraph lies, of course, in using the Russian form of Turcanu's first name (*Evghenii* for *Eugen*), alluding to his ancestry with a middle name that resembles Makarenko's, and then giving him the Soviet hack's last name. (*Tr.*)

brought laughter, at least for the time. Everyone began comparing Makarenko's "pedagogy" to Turcanu's, and the unmaskings at Pitesti were then and there labeled "Pedagogic Poem." It wasn't very long before Turcanu was being called, in the cell, "Evghenii Simionov Makarenko," and if someone wanted to know whether you had passed through unmaskings, he asked if you had read the Pedagogic Poem. This allusion implied, of course, that the system of re-education was also of Soviet origin.

If Calciu could no longer even "in part" apply his re-educative methods in our cell, still he could not be prevented from keeping under perfect control those who had been his collaborators in the workshop. He did not stay in the cell very long; he was taken out by the political officer and sent to the infirmary. After his departure the atmosphere cleared completely, and the rest of the re-educated, little by little, without being pushed, or even challenged, began to find themselves. The month of May came, and with it an almost complete healing of wounds with the integration of almost all who had undergone unmasking, into the normal monotony of prison life.

The few who held out through despair or stubbornness, were left to grind their teeth in impotent anger — and alone.

Although our cell attained peace, the same could not be said of other cells. Where the re-educated felt they could still apply some of their nefarious methodology, there were quite serious disorders. In one cell, the re-educated severely beat the cell-mates who defied their orders; in others where they were few and tried to act as informers, they were themselves beaten and isolated by being completely ignored, as though they were not there at all.

It is possible that some offences of the re-educated were occasioned by the others' lack of tact. I talked with one who continued to denounce even after the February isolation, and I asked him why he was doing this when no one forced him to. He replied, "It is well that a wounded dog be left alone in peace to heal his wounds by licking them. If no one can help him, it's best that nobody irritate him, lest he bite, out of pain or despair."

There were some real family dramas. Take, for instance, the two brothers M., who both had been through unmaskings. The younger was sent to the canal labor camp with a light sentence, the older to Gherla, where he became head of the labor and wages service. After the canal was closed down, younger M. was sent also to Gherla; but now he was completely healed of his wounds. The older brother, however, continued to maintain himself "in position," and considered his young brother a "bandit and saboteur." Consequently he punished him by cutting him off the list for food ration cards!

Nevertheless, the younger brother wanted to convince the older of the absurdity of continuing his role, but this he could not do because their cells were in opposite ends of the prison. As a desperate stratagem, he declared a hunger strike and told the director he would not eat till he was moved into the same cell with his brother. In reply, the director had him put in irons, in isolation, where he persisted in his hunger strike and continued to lose weight. The administration told him — falsely — that the Ministry of the Interior alone could make cell assignments, and that the matter had been referred to it. Several days later they told him his brother had been transferred to another prison and he would have to give up his hunger strike. But the price he had to pay was high: he ate only once

in three days, slept on iron bars without a mattress or cover. A categorical disposition of the case by the Ministry of the Interior interdicted the sharing of the same cell by members of the same family, and the interdiction was zealously extended to apply to known friends as well as relatives.

Personally I had to deal with a case as painful as it was strange. A student of mathematics from the Polytechnical School of Bucharest, condemned to 25 years, who still maintained his posture of re-educated even after the isolation, was caught by a guard with a soap tablet on which he had made some mathematical calculations. He was given 40 days in isolation in a cell adjoining ours. I tried to talk to him by means of adapted Morse code, but he did not know these signals. I noticed that the windows of his cell and ours were at right angles to each other, and not far apart. As a heavy shutter protected us from the eyes of guards in the courtyard below, and I placed a cell-mate as guard at our door's peephole, I was able to converse with the engineering student at the window. He was obsessed with the idea that the Russians were all-powerful and was convinced they would rule the world.

"You will see," he said, "maybe later, but certainly, that the Russians will conquer the entire world. It cannot be otherwise." And again: "The West is morally decomposed; it is a swamp in which everything that is pure drowns. The Russians will bring their punishment, for the West, when it had the power, made no use of it when it could; now it is too late; the Russians are a sort of destiny!"

He was a man of superior intelligence, but all my efforts to show him that everything he had been saying was only a reflection of his subconscious terror ended in failure.

Several days later I, too, was put in isolation for 10 days to sleep on iron bars in a heatless cell (this was February, 1955) and for what reason? The excuse was that I was accused of having written on the wall paragraphs in several foreign languages, including German (a much decried language at the time, of course), and since I was the only member of the cell who knew German, I was guilty. When I was returned to the cell after isolation, I could not learn if the fellow in the other cell had changed his thinking or not, because he had been transferred somewhere else.

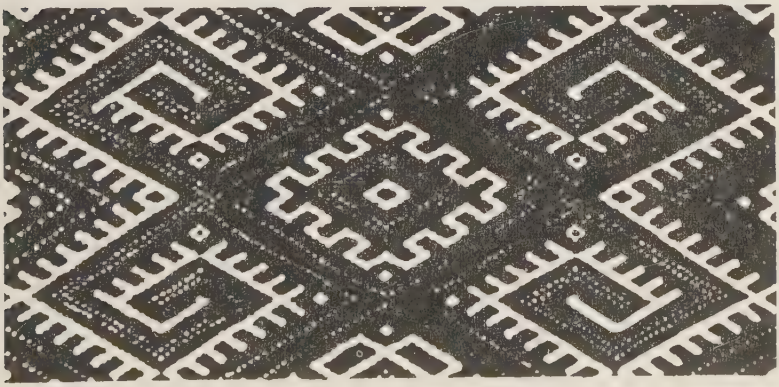
Penalties inflicted by Director Goiciu on students were incomparably greater than those given non-students. He was constantly trying to regain some of his lost ground, but in vain. Contempt for him only increased. If an ordinary prisoner received two weeks of isolation, a student prisoner got twice that, plus a severe regimen. Take the case of the student Petre N., for example, who had the temerity to stand up to the political officer when the prison van delivered him to the Gherla depot. He was immediately sent to isolation with 20-pound leg-irons for a month in the dead of winter in addition to the severe regimen. When he had served out his time, the political officer asked him if he did not regret his impudence at the depot.

"Your regulations," replied the cold, starved student, "do not include any punishment strong enough to match the utter contempt I have for all of you." So uncertain of itself had the administration been that the official merely gnashed his teeth and turned his back on the student, leaving him in peace.

After things returned to normal, I tried many times to compare the way a man behaved after he recovered from re-education with the way he had behaved before under-

going unmasking. At first sight, I could not see a great deal of difference: the same self-contained bearing, the same serious preoccupations, the same goodness and benevolence. But unseen was a real abyss between what he had been and what he had become. The unmaskings left scars on the surface, and down deep there was still an open, bleeding wound. I could but wonder about a meeting between such men and their victims, if they were to meet in freedom — even though almost all prisoners understood the drama and did not harbor resentment against those who had denounced or tortured them. Man can forgive, because he must; but he can never forget, for forgetting is not in his power. What was done cannot be undone; and the persecutor can forget no more than the victim, whether or not he did it against his will, against his faith.

I could not but wonder whether these men would ever be able to return to normal living, or would be able only to simulate having done so, remaining in the depths of their souls forever ruined, crucified on their own helplessness.



CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TRIAL

I return to A. Camus's words quoted in the first chapter: "Philosophy can change murderers into judges."

The tragedy of the Pitesti prisoners, too, has its fatal denouement like any other drama.

There exists an ineluctable "truth," naturally Communistic, that anything that serves the Party is "just," is appreciated and encouraged. If later, for reasons never sufficiently clear, this "just" no longer serves some new Party line, it immediately becomes "unjust" and is condemned, "reproved with indignation." I do not think examples are here necessary. The numerous "ideological leaders" who took the road to exile or the firing squad in the Soviet Union during the last decade alone are sufficient proofs of this policy. Throughout my years in prison, I often shared a cell with former Party members. Among them were some who had done great service for the Party and had spared no effort to apply "the line." They were made scapegoats and classified with the enemy without the slightest hesitation. In response to their protests at such treatment, they always and everywhere received a stereotyped answer something like this: "For your good accomplishments the Party will raise a statue in your honor; for the bad ones, you are paying right now," even if what they had done was simply carry out with strict fidelity the Party orders before they changed direction.

In the case of unmaskings, it was only logical that those

who voluntarily offered themselves to start the experiment should have been rewarded with freedom at the end of their term of service. Rewarded they were, but with the fire from an automatic pistol!

The whole experiment had been born out of evil and lies. It was through wickedness and deception that it had to end. But in order that everything might be consummated within the framework of "Communist legality," and bear the imprint of "justice," a trial was staged. In the dock sat the victims; official representatives of the Party, the real implementors of the crime, sat on the bench.

There had been many so-called "sensational" trials. The Communists saw to it that people became accustomed to them and, seemingly to keep the memory fresh, would stage another every now and then. To Westerners, this may seem an odd way of administering justice, but of course, they are used to "bourgeois" justice and do not comprehend the higher form of Marxian dialectics.

Even the most cynical of assassins seeks a loophole in his indictment and even a madman does not receive a death sentence with joy, but under Communism everything can be easily arranged ahead of time by means of torture and lies, such as "a publicly admitted mistake is half forgiven." That is, until the compromising declaration is obtained from the victim! The rest is only too well known; when the hangman's noose tightens around one's neck, anybody is willing to make a small concession if it will save his life — rather the hair than the head, as the proverb goes.

In the Communist type of justice the trials are not to find proof of guilt as such but to provide a pretext for a condemnation demanded by the Securitate — a condemna-

tion not of any deed, but of a person as a *potential enemy* or as no longer useful. Thus the Bucharest Tribunal that tried Turcanu and his fellows was seeking a justification for condemning those who for three years had done nothing but execute with zeal the orders given them by the initiators of the experiment. How the declarations of the prisoners were obtained is not known, but we do know the general methods employed.

The initial intention, according to what transpired unofficially, was to stage a public trial with newspapermen and "indignant" workers' delegations, with photographers and plenty of publicity. But something made the Tribunal change its mind, possibly the pre-trial interrogations of the various witnesses who were to testify. There was some risk of an upset, and the Party could have then been exposed in its true light just at the critical moment when it wanted to conclude the drama of its experiment with a "legal" finale.

Why did they feel a trial necessary? Liquidating those who "knew too much" could have been accomplished more simply and quietly, at night somewhere, for "trying to escape while under escort," a procedure that was not new and had produced satisfactory results some years earlier when, on the night of November 30, 1938, Codreanu and thirteen of his followers were assassinated by King Carol's henchmen. Did they need a justification in legal form for concluding an unsuccessful experiment and eliminating those who might talk inopportunely? Perhaps in time we shall know.

At any rate, the "show trial" to teach the people a lesson never took place, but instead hearings were held behind closed doors, attended only by prison directors, interro-

gating officers, and Communist political personalities little known or completely without any contact with the people.

One was able to learn very little of what went on in the secret proceedings and nothing at all of what the accused had to say. Some aspects of the trial were learned from Party members who could not keep their mouths shut and from the forty witnesses, who were all prisoners who had passed through unmaskings or were victims of some sort.

By collating this information with various slips of the tongue on the part of political officers in the prisons, the course of the trial can partly be reconstructed. Witnesses testified separately, none being allowed to be present at any proceedings except the one at which he answered the questions asked him by the Tribunal's president. They were not told who were the members of the Tribunal, whose names were never made public, but they could see that the judges and the prosecutor were superior officers, perhaps from the cadres of military justice.*

It would seem impossible for the Communists to find a way of exculpating themselves, but, no matter how absurd it sounds, they found one: they alleged that the unmaskings at Pitesti had been initiated by the leaders of the nationalist student group!! Crimes were committed against the prisoners by these nationalists in order to blame the Communist regime and discredit it in the eyes of the people and of international opinion!

The military prosecutor demanded punishment of the "nationalist" defendants for crimes against humanity, for all the crimes were blamed on them. And to bolster the monstrous lie and make it hold together, they implied that

*I.e., corresponding to the office of the Judge Advocate General in the United States Army. (*Tr.*)

there was someone from the outside who must have given directives to those inside the prison who were "in the conspiracy." It was then no problem at all to prove that there must have been a responsible person who established the liaison between the leader from abroad and those in prison. Several persons were considered for this role, among them a lawyer from Iasi, but in the end they decided upon a student. If my memory serves me well, he was named Simionescu; in any case, whatever his name, he was tortured for months in the Ministry of the Interior, and kept continually in leg-irons and handcuffs, to force him to recite the testimony dictated by the Securitate.* But Simionescu refused. Had they really insisted very much, and been determined to produce the testimony they wanted, they could, of course, have done so; all they would have needed was time to brainwash the unfortunate individual whom they chose and teach him his "confession." But a sudden — and inexplicable — urgency did not allow time for proper preparation. After three years of pre-trial investigations and interrogation of over a hundred prisoners who had passed through unmaskings, the case was brought to trial with a haste that can be explained only by a sudden need† to dispose of it as quickly as possible.

In the end, allegations of the responsibility of persons outside the prison were discarded or suppressed, leaving the only responsible head Turcanu!

Prisoners put in the dock as defendants at this trial were: Eugen Turcanu ("And lo! his name led all the

*It is noteworthy that only ordinary tortures were used, without recourse to the techniques applied at Pitesti, and strange that the Tribunal did not think of using one of the re-educated for this purpose. The inefficiency of Bolshevik underlings is often astonishing. (*Tr.*)

†Presumably orders from above. (*Tr.*)

rest!"); Alexandru Popa, nicknamed Tanu; Martinus; Constantin Juberian; Cornel Pop; Levinschi; Doctor Barbosu, official physician of Gherla prison, now become useless and therefore dangerous; and several others.

The trial was started in October 1954, but it is not known how long it lasted. Testimony of the 40 witnesses for the prosecution took several days. Sentences were pronounced around the middle of December, but news of the trial did not reach our prison till February or March 1955, coming first through Jilava or some other prison from which a prisoner was transferred. I learned it from a person in the prison's infirmary, who transmitted the news by a hand put through a crack in the window shutter. Later, several prisoners confirmed the report, as did, indirectly, the Military Tribunal of Bucharest when it published the death notice of one of the condemned.

The witnesses testified under heavy guard and were "closely counseled" by the officers interrogating them at the Ministry. As before mentioned, they were introduced into the hearings one at a time, so they knew nothing of the over-all proceedings.

Nothing was withheld during the hearings. The smallest details of the unmaskings were fully described, from the beatings to the ordeal of the mess-pan filled with feces; from the torturous squatting to the insulting of everything the prisoner held dear. But accusations were brought only against those who had actually inflicted the tortures, and who now sat in the dock as the accused. In reality, everyone present knew that they were merely the front men for the real culprits.

Among the witnesses were two workers from Gherla, one of whom, it will be remembered, pleaded with the

inspector to end the unmaskings, and the other, who attempted to commit suicide by slashing his wrists in the isolation cell with broken glass from the window pane. They told of the promises made to them by the officers to whom they reported the state of affairs, and of the fact that their subsequent tortures became more brutal and bloody than before. The president of the Tribunal tried unsuccessfully to divert their answers by claiming that they were not relevant to the questions asked, which pertained only to the defendants and the crimes they allegedly had committed.

The testimony of the defendants is not known. Whether they defended themselves by revealing the identity of those who were really responsible or assumed the entire responsibility themselves, hoping thus to win the indulgence of the Securitate, is of little importance, for they were not there to be tried, but to be condemned. It was reported specifically of Turcanu that he had admitted everything and had assumed complete responsibility for the crimes imputed to him. It did not matter whether he did or not; his fate had in fact already been decided, and the presiding judge was the only one of those on the bench who could be identified by any of the witnesses; a student, one who had been previously arrested during the Antonescu administration, recognized him. The judge's name was Alexandru Petrescu and he was considered one of the most sinister characters ever thrust from the law schools into Romanian society. In his way, he was unique. A career military judge, he was Director-General of Penitentiaries during Atonescu's administration. The Legionaries knew him well, for often their fate had been in his hands before his decision was reviewed by Antonescu. Although publicly a strong supporter of Antonescu's dictatorship, he was also a secret collaborator with the Communists, facilitating their pene-

tration into the Lugoj prison to aid Burah Tescovici, alias Teohari Georgescu.* Apparently about to be purged in 1948, as were all of his colleagues, he found himself elevated to the rank of general (he was a colonel) because he agreed to preside over the tribunal that condemned Iuliu Maniu. In addition to scores of death sentences attributed to him, he was credited with more than 100,000 man-years of imprisonment pronounced in trials of Legionaries alone.

In the habit of blindly executing all the orders of the Securitate, Petrescu naturally in their 1954 "trial" pronounced the prescribed sentence: death for all defendants. The only sentence about which there is some doubt is that of Doctor Barbosu; it is not known whether he was condemned to die or be imprisoned for life. However, both sentences are practically equivalent in Communist prisons.

The sentences were carried out. One of the victims, Martinus, was later called as a witness for a subsequent trial, but in response to the order for his appearance in court, a death certificate was produced, showing that he had died in 1955.

All those tried were, naturally, identified as "Fascists," or agents of the American espionage apparatus. It is not clear on what basis the persons selected for trial and execution were chosen; certainly persons equally notorious for equally monstrous ferocity such as Titus Leonida, Diaca, Coriolan Coifan, Hentes, and Bucoveanu, were never

*Burah Tescovici (1908-?), a Jew who early adopted the Romanian name of Teohari Georgescu to conceal his origin, became an active Communist agent and conspirator in 1929, if not earlier, and was considered one of the most dangerous aliens in the country. After the Soviet occupation of Romania, he became one of the four chiefs of the Communist Party in Romania and collaborated closely with the repellant and infamous Jewess, Ana Rabinovich (Pauker). He became Minister of the Interior in the "Romanian" government in 1947, and was purged in 1952. (*Tr.*)

brought to trial, although they were the peers of Turcanu and even the superiors of Pop in sadistic accomplishments. Exempt from trial also was one of the worst offenders, Ludovic Reck, a Communist, condemned to prison because he had been also an informer in Antonescu's police force.* With the help of Hentes and Juberian, he murdered Flueras by beating him with sandbags till he spat out his lungs.

Also missing from the trial as defendants were: Captain Goiciu, Captain Gheorghiu, Lieutenants Dumitrescu, Avadanei, and Mihalcea, whose direct responsibility for the unmaskings was much greater than that of the students sentenced to death, whom they had had under their control and who had done nothing without their supervision and collaboration.

Because of "technical reasons", it is said, a second "trial" was staged, with the same kind of defendants, the main one this time being the student Gheorghe Calciu, nicknamed Ghita by his "friends."

He was moved from Gherla in the spring of 1954 to the Ministry of the Interior for investigation. At the time of his departure he was still a convinced re-educator. I do not know how long he remained so, but exactly two years later I had a unique opportunity to learn — directly from him — about his passing through the hands of the Ministry and the reception they gave him.

In 1956, in a cell of the main section of the Ministry on Victoriei Street, in fact right next to the room of the officer-on-duty at the front of the building (also called the Section Chief's office), I found an inscription scratched on the wall, possibly with a needle, in Morse code, which shook me considerably. The sentence read:

*See ch. XIII above.

"Gheorghe Calciu, I was brought here to be murdered; I am innocent."

Close by, also scratched in the wall, toward the left corner nearer the door but not visible to anyone looking in through its peephole, I read the following:

"Gheorghe Balan, I am completely innocent."*

In regard to Calciu's trial, some fragmentary information leaked out. I learned about it shortly before I left Romania. The trial was held in the summer of 1957, also in Bucharest, and also before a military tribunal. Someone who witnessed it in an official capacity leaked a few details which prove a good deal, and place Calciu in quite a different light from Turcanu.

The presiding judge was the same General Petrescu. Following the reading of the accusation, Calciu was called upon to answer, or rather to confess his "crime against humanity." To the amazement of all, but particularly of the investigators, the defendant defied the entire tribunal and threw back in its face the truth without any reservations. Calciu accused those who were in fact responsible for all the crimes committed. His diatribe was so unexpected that the tribunal's presiding judge, at the request of the investigators assisting at the trial, suspended the proceedings till a later date. This postponement had as its aim the utilization of the known "methods of persuasion" frequently employed by the Securitate, this time to

*They were probably accused of being "Fascists" and "in the pay of the American imperialists," terms which were synonymous in the Bolshevik propaganda in the occupied countries of Europe — charges of which the two men were, of course, innocent, but to which Communist methodology required a "confession," even when the "trial," as here, was to be kept secret and so could not be used in local propaganda. The need to extort such "confessions," known to be utterly false by all concerned and utterly useless in secret proceedings, is one of the most curious and significant traits of an alien mentality that the West can describe only as psychopathic. (*Tr.*)

compel Calciu to retract his accusation and "assume the entire responsibility for the crimes committed." The trial was resumed the very next day, perhaps because Calciu had agreed the night before to modify his attitude. But despite the promise he probably gave under torture, the next day he was even more categorical. In consequence, the trial was abruptly postponed *sine die*. It is likely that Ghita Calciu never was tried and sentenced, but died a "natural" death, a frequent phenomenon in prisons.

When I left the prison in 1956, the prisoners still heatedly discussed the tortures inflicted on students and other prisoners. There still remained isolated in various prisons several cases of which one can say that they have never recovered.

After the experiment at Pitesti, the methods of torture were no longer the same. Other means of extermination, more scientific and more rigorous, drained away the minds of political prisoners, reducing them to the condition of animals.

In order to explain more fully the system of lying and the paradoxical logic that made a crime into a moral deed, an enormity into a virtue, I shall relate a conversation I had in the winter of 1954 with a director-general in the Ministry of the Interior. (If he was not the Director-General, he was, at least, a very important personage in the regime. Prisoners are not told either the name or the position of the individual interrogating them.)

After being switched for almost two months from one investigating room to another, one night at the beginning of March, I was taken into a room on the sixth floor and brought face to face with this very important person who tried to convince me of some "truths" which I had refused to recognize. Since this was not a run-of-the-mill type of

investigation, but rather a discussion pro and con on various subjects, I took advantage of a propitious moment to ask him "whether it is true that at Pitesti were committed some quite strange acts that caused the maiming and even death of some of the prisoners." Taken aback, he could not control an expression of shock, and immediately asked me,

"What do you know about the happenings at Pitesti?"

"Personally," I hedged, "I could not learn much except some allusions by several students in a discussion a long time ago," and I hoped he would not press the question. He seemed satisfied with my answer and seemed disposed to enlighten me.

"As a matter of fact," said he, "it was quite a simple matter. A group of arrested students, agents of American imperialism, stubborn and retrograde mystics, started to torture their colleagues, in order thus to compromise the prison's administration and consequently the Party."

"But as I understood it," I said, "this category of 'retrograde' students represented approximately eighty per cent of all the students in prison. Whom did they fight?"

"They fought among themselves."

"To what purpose?" I asked. "I do not quite follow how this would compromise the Party."

"They received instructions from outside," he explained, "from those who are abroad and lead teams of spies and saboteurs; by torturing one another, the victims could accuse the Party as the culprit."

"Nevertheless," I persisted, "this seems almost unbelievable, with prisons having such a very strict system of internal supervision. How was it possible for these horrors

to take place without the immediate intervention of the Ministry?"

"We knew nothing of what happened there," he replied. "When we finally learned about these happenings, we took the necessary steps and punished the guilty in order to discourage others from doing likewise."

This was the kind of answer I had expected, for I already knew what had happened at Turcanu's trial. However, I could not keep from replying somewhat brusquely:

"I have been a prisoner for seven years and have passed through almost all the country's penitentiaries. Either isolated, or in common cells, never could we make the slightest move without being seen by the guards in the halls, and I do not count the many and various searches made unexpectedly in the middle of the night. The rigorous surveillance to which we were subjected made impossible even the use of a sewing needle without the consent of the guard. How could all these things have happened without the political officers being immediately informed by the guards? Or is it that you had not one person of trust in all these prisons, where the acts which you have just described took place, not a single one to inform you of what was going on?"

"The prison administration was in the hands of some opportunists," he said, "enemies of the people who had infiltrated with the express desire to do harm. They collaborated with the bandits; but they, too, have now been punished as they deserved."

I said nothing to this, and did not tell him any more of what I had learned about the Pitesti experiment. Nor did I mention that I knew that the "opportunists" he mentioned in the prison administration not only were not

penalized, but had received promotions to higher positions; or that I knew that Turcanu, before coming to Gherla, had forwarded his notorious memorandum to the Ministry of which my interrogator was a member; or that, on the basis of extorted confessions during unmaskings, scores of trials were held after the confessions had passed through the hands of the Ministry; or of so many other details known to them only because they had been reported to them by the re-educators — or that, of course no remedial steps were ever taken.

Several months later I was freed.

Behind me I left the bars of various penitentiaries, Securitates, forced labor camps, and "centers for re-education" where tens of thousands of prisoners languish and suffer with no kind of amnesty in sight to lighten their punishment. Above them all, like the sword of Damocles, hovers the ever imminent danger that another experiment similar to, or even more "scientific" than the one at Pitesti may be staged at any time. I left behind tens of thousands of fellow Romanians imprisoned under the care of the same directors-general, subjected day and night to a program of gradual animalization, and the undermining of physical and moral health through total inactivity, darkened cells, constant malnutrition, isolation, a severe routine and chains — always chains on wrists and legs!

Those who bore part of the responsibility are now in their graves. But they are not the most guilty.

Some of the re-education's victims too have left for a juster world (for not even in hell do such cruelties take place). Perhaps there they will find understanding and maybe forgiveness.

On the other hand, still alive, though maimed and sick, are those who for the last ten years have been suffering

in isolation, as have the re-educated who recovered their original equilibrium, now broken and isolated from every contact with the world.

Let us hope that some day these prisoners will have to be listened to;* let us hope that the criminals who put and keep them there will one day be brought to justice, namely:

General Nicolschi, head of the investigation brigades in the Securitate;

Dullberger (later Dulgheru), head of the mobile brigades and transport;

Jianu and *Tescovici* (alias Georgescu), both former Ministers of the Interior;

Draghici and *Borila*, Ministers of the "People's" Securitate;

Keller, Goiciu, Mihalcea, Avadanei, Gheorghiu, Dumitrescu, Kirion, Archide, Gal, the guard *Cucu, Niki, Mandruta, Ciobanu* — all implicated in responsibility for both the torturings and the terror inaugurated by the O.D.C.C. in prisons and labor camps.

To the bar of justice may all these come, and let us hope that the passage of time does not deprive them of the power of speech! (Various purges of the Party have been known to bring about such a condition!)

Naturally, there are people who do not want to believe that the events which took place at Pitesti and the other prisons were a scientific experiment, and claim that the supporting evidence is circumstantial and not conclusive. Consequently, two theories have been advanced. One, the more widely held, is that the Communist Party merely wanted to annihilate the Romanian Nationalist Movement, which could only be done by destroying the young who carried the Legionary ideas and traditions and were thus a link between past and future.

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*This hope, formed in 1958, was, of course, in vain. (*Tr.*)

But the unmaskings contributed nothing to the consolidation of the Communist regime itself, for most of the anti-Communist resistance was already behind bars, and the unmaskings in prison did not greatly help to round up the remnants of opposition outside. The results did not justify the effort — could not possibly have justified it. And this is why:

The years of imprisonment, with their savage privations and long duration, had already killed or neutralized a large part of the youth of Romania. The majority of those who passed through prisons and were released alive were in broken health or too experienced to expose themselves again to useless suffering. The terror, the memories of imprisonment, the deportations to Baragan, destroyed for all practical purposes any possible reactivating an effective resistance. This is a verified fact. And the several thousand men *inside* the prisons certainly could not change what had been decided by the great Dividers of the World at the "Conference Tables" where Europe was dismembered.

In the event the Party should fall from power at some future time, the crimes perpetrated in the prisons would have made its record only so much more monstrous. The physical extermination of the students of Romania, or even of all the political prisoners, would have resolved nothing, for the People is a living organism that perpetuates itself by biological continuity. Its potential will be restored, if it is allowed to exist and reproduce itself for a sufficient length of time; the vacuum created by massacres will be filled by the People's fertility. Killing or incapacitating an entire section of the population does not necessarily destroy an idea, for an idea is generated by the very biological structure of the nation in question, not by a type

of man belonging to a particular class or generation. Then, too, there is the purely psychological factor. The persecution of an idea, especially by aliens who have infiltrated and seized the nation that generated it, imparts to this idea only a greater popularity.

The other theory was one held especially by many students — that of pure irrational revenge. The student movement had been throughout four decades, until the collapse of the Romanian State, the most consistent enemy of Communism, the only formidable obstacle to the growth of Communist power. Our enemies, repeatedly frustrated over the years by the student movement, naturally accumulated in their minds a boundless and infinite hatred that easily found expression in retaliation by ultimate brutality the moment they achieved political power. Thus the "Pitesti Phenomenon" served only to prove further the utter and inhuman depravity of the Bolsheviks.

But if that had been the purpose, why was the insane fury halted short of total fulfillment of its lusts? There was no economic, military, or (given the total secrecy) propagandist reason why any Legionaries should have been spared the dehumanization, and certainly no reason why any of the victims should have been permitted to recover their minds and even to recount what they had experienced. The only plausible or even intelligible reason for halting the application of the unmasking technique at that time is that the purpose of its application had somehow been accomplished.

Re-education, therefore, cannot have been designed expressly to destroy a resistance already become powerless, or even to inflict the utmost horrors in *all* whom the anti-humans most hated. The aim of the experimenters seems

to have been that of determining, on the basis of scientific data, the extent to which a man could be robbed of his personality and be completely and irreversibly restructured. The ultimate recovery of the majority of the victims proved that the transformation thus affected was not irreversible.

CHAPTER XXIX

AT JILAVA AS WELL

Before I conclude this record, I shall mention another kind of unmaskings, identical in scope with those at Pitesti and Gherla, but conducted with a variation in method. The main feature of these unmaskings was the fact that there was no effort to dissimulate the administration's participation in them — in fact they were openly conducted by the prison personnel, though through prisoners as instruments.

In the spring of 1950 a special room was prepared at Jilava in one of the barracks in the courtyard for use in torturing prisoners who were awaiting trial.

The method was very simple. A guard, usually part of the outer watch, accompanied by the head of the "secret" section, entered a cell and called out the name of the prisoner to be investigated. In the corridor, the prisoner's head was covered with a hood so he could see nothing. The guard then took him by the arm and led him through the courtyard and into that specially prepared room.

Here, his eyes still covered and with the guard's grip still on his arm, he was subjected to a stringent inquisition usually based on information gathered in his cell by informers introduced for that function, or through the indiscretions of his various friends in other cells, or directly from the files being compiled at the Ministry of the Interior for his eventual trial. Identification of the interrogators was difficult, for the only means of recognition was by

their voices, and the victims naturally supposed they must be facing officers sent from the Ministry of the Interior. Eventually, however, they learned that their questioners were merely other prisoners almost exclusively chosen from among "former" members of the Communist apparatus.

Presumably these old Communists had sinned by agreeing to become informers for the Romanian Securitate during the government of Antonescu. Their leader or, in any case, the one conducting the investigations and directing the torture, was named Mihailov, a Bessarabian seemingly of Russian origin, arrested for having denounced several of his fellow-Communists during the War. Among his collaborators at Jilava, assisting in the "investigations," the meanest and also the most savage was one by the name of Pascu, a mechanic by occupation, and a Communist arrested for the same reasons as Mihailov. I had occasion to meet him several years later, after he was sent to Gherla, where he continued to serve the prison's administration as informer. That was why he was charged with the surveillance of the communal bath, a quite comfortable and especially convenient spot, where he did nothing but oversee those who bathed, and could eavesdrop on every word spoken. Another participant at Jilava was a Hungarian mechanic, Buchs, who was sent to Aiud in 1951 and there was quite discreet, behaving relatively well. (It is possible that the Securitate's promises, later broken, had opened his eyes.) In addition, it was reported that a simple worker, rather retarded mentally, was used particularly to conduct prolonged beatings. The team of "investigators" numbered over ten, but only those I have just mentioned were definitely identified.

The first discovery that the investigators were not political officers was occasioned by an interesting coincidence.

It so happened that before ex-Lieutenant Z. of the Medical Corps was taken out of his cell for another interrogation, Mihailov had been replaced. So in the barracks room, where Lieutenant Z. expected to hear Mihailov's voice, the questioner had a voice quite different. Already cruelly brutalized and being an independent spirit (in fact, this is why he was sent off to Archangel while he was still a prisoner of war in Russia), he became so irritated that he snatched off the hood covering his head. To his stupefaction, seated at the investigating table were not the Securitate officers he expected to see, but ordinary prisoners; and the person who had always led him from his cell and now stood at his side was just a uniformed prison guard!

The atmosphere that prevailed at Jilava was totally different from that at other prisons, especially because no one there had yet been sentenced and all imagined they would be liberated before the Communists had time to try them.* This explains in part the courage of various prisoners who refused to make "confessions" when taken before Mihailov. It seems also, however, that the Ministry of the Interior was not very insistent, for when word got around throughout the isolation cells, they "closed" the O.D.C.C. office at Jilava, though not before scores of "political detainees" had been tortured into bloody pulp.

It could be that there was no direct connection between the unmaskings at Pitesti and what happened at Jilava, but the coincidence in time and some similarity of method make it impossible to deny that there was *some* coordination toward a previously well-determined end. It should be remembered also that Pitesti, an execution penitentiary, and Jilava, a stockade for the Ministry of the Interior,

*In the early 1950's, many Romanians believed the propaganda put out from Washington! (*Tr.*)

were the two prisons closest to Bucharest; in other words, the most accessible to those who wanted to maintain close supervision and rigorous control.

If I mention the inquisitions at Jilava, pallid in comparison with those of Pitesti, but brutal and sadistic, it is only to show that a single intelligence planned and directed the use of prisoners to torture their fellow prisoners. Jilava was evidently a part of the experiment.*

*If we had more detailed information about the procedures at Jilava, its function in the experiment, as a "control group" or otherwise, might be clearer. (*Tr.*)

CHAPTER XXX

A LAST WORD

Perhaps more will be written about what happened at Pitesti and at the other prisons, if the information ever penetrates the Iron Curtain.*

The contents of this little book of mine aim only to direct the reader's attention to a phenomenon too vast in its scope and application to permit the possibility of ascertainment of complete factual information (what is available from Communist prisons is very limited), and a definitive explanation of it in strictly psychological terms. In addition to the strict supervision of prison life, my observations were limited by the understandable embarrassment that the victims felt over many details of their experiences and conduct. Nor were they a few who simply refused to discuss at all the most painful sector of their lives.

But fragmentary as they are, the contents of this book are true. Nobody can deny this, not even the "Communist authorities" at the helm of my country. I do not believe that a better account of these events can be found than the one given by the victims of the experiment themselves.

It is possible that the "Party" may not take notice of this work, or it may institute a campaign of denial and slander against it, specifically by ordering those who were tortured to "indignantly deny the lies put out in the service

*On the recent book by Dr. Carja, see the first footnote on p. x. — *Editor.*

of capitalism." If this proves to be the case, it will not be without many precedents. I shall cite one here, since it involves students, who, of all prisoners, suffered the most. This example comes from the experience of students in the so-called "free" life of a Romanian university in 1956.

In those days, hope of liberation was less chimerical than it now is, and the West had not yet proved conclusively that it is completely disinterested in human freedom. In Hungary the students in Budapest joined forces with workers and, side by side with them, endeavored to break their chains; they succeeded in visibly shaking for a short time the rule of Satan. Their act had great repercussions in the universities of Romania, particularly at Timisoara, the closest to Hungary, and at Bucharest, where the student body was largest and the most agitated. A successful uprising in two colleges of Bucharest university (Letters and Medicine) was quickly put down by force through the power of the Securitate. But at Timisoara, events were more complicated.

To begin with, the Minister of Education, Murgulescu, tried to reduce tensions there but to no avail. In fact, he only succeeded in stirring things up to such a pitch that, notwithstanding his high position, he was forced to flee through a window of the cafeteria under a bombardment of handfuls of mush thrown by irate students. As a result, the demonstration which the students had planned for four o'clock that afternoon was cancelled by the authorities, and several battalions of troops from the Securitate were sent in and stationed around the dormitories.

In the evening, the Minister of the Interior himself arrived by plane and tried to pacify the students. He prom-

ised to meet all three of their demands, namely: elimination of Marxism and the Russian language as required subjects; liberalization of the whole university; and the dissolution of the cadre of students acting as spies for the Securitate. But after promising these things and getting the students quieted down and back to their rooms, he gave them the real answer: machine gun fire! For over two hours, in order to give the Securitate time to rush in reinforcements, the dormitory of the Medical College was kept under fire from automatic weapons. Then the assault was staged, with soldiers rushing into the building with arms at the ready. To oppose them the students had only their books and marmalade jars. For several hours, students were arrested and hauled away in trucks to an army camp unoccupied since the war, about 40 miles from Timisoara. Then for three days a vigorous search was conducted for students in the streets and homes of the city. *Everyone* whose card identified him as a student was arrested on the spot with no reason given, then hustled out to the camp. Not until the Hungarian uprising had been suppressed, however, were the arrested students given hearings. The majority were then freed provided they signed a declaration that they would never again participate in any action directed against the "Workers' Party!" Several hundred were expelled from the university. In all this, social status obviously played no part at all, for the most rebellious of the students were those who came from poor families! Several score were considered "instigators of the rebellion against the legal social order" and spent some time in the cellars of the Securitate, then before the Tribunal, where sentences decreed by the Securitate were pronounced. The sentences varied in length from five years' imprisonment to hard labor for life.

By late December of 1956, when the situation had quieted down and the Communists felt secure of their victory, some strange "meetings" began to take place in various centers throughout the country. Under strict supervision by the Securitate, students vigorously protested "slanders in the capitalistic press," which had reported, rather vaguely, some "unrest" on the campuses. Speeches, previously written and dictated by the Securitate, were "spontaneously" delivered from many rostra. These contained fulsome praise of the Party and the Soviet and affirmed the "unconditional attachment" of all students to the "working class in the People's Romania", expressing their deep indignation and their "pledges" of vigilance against the "enemy [*sic*] of the Romanian people." Such slop was poured out for days. The same students in whom, several weeks earlier, had been stirred a hope of liberation, now denied everything and professed loyalty to the regime.

It is not unlikely that a similar denunciation of this book will be launched, and a comparable denial of its veracity manufactured by the same process.

* * * * *

These lines have been written to fulfill a pledge I made to several victims of the unmaskings who, knowing that some day I would be able to smuggle the book through the Iron Curtain, had confided to me, frequently with pain and great inner anxiety, everything they thought it was man's duty not to forget.

More than just a record of these events, this book is a warning; it is a voice from beyond the grave, from the living dead behind the Iron Curtain. Let anyone draw conclusions according to his own heart.

Lastly, I would like to say that while some died and some were obdurate, most of the victims recovered. Man has within himself certain powers that nobody can destroy — not even himself; for man does not belong to himself, and the powers within him proclaim Him Who created man.

Bucharest, 1958
Paris, 1962

———

New York, 1970

POSTSCRIPT

Let not the reader imagine that there has been any change in the Beasts of the Apocalypse or any "mellowing" or "relaxation" of their sadism in Romania or any other country they have captured. In Romania, when the extraordinarily severe floods began in May, 1970, the Communist Ministry of the Interior ordered the directors and staffs of the prisons at Aiud and Gherla to abandon them after having locked the prisoners in their cells. How many Romanians were thus disposed of at Aiud has not been learned, but at Gherla 600 helpless men watched the waters slowly rise in their cells and were eventually drowned.

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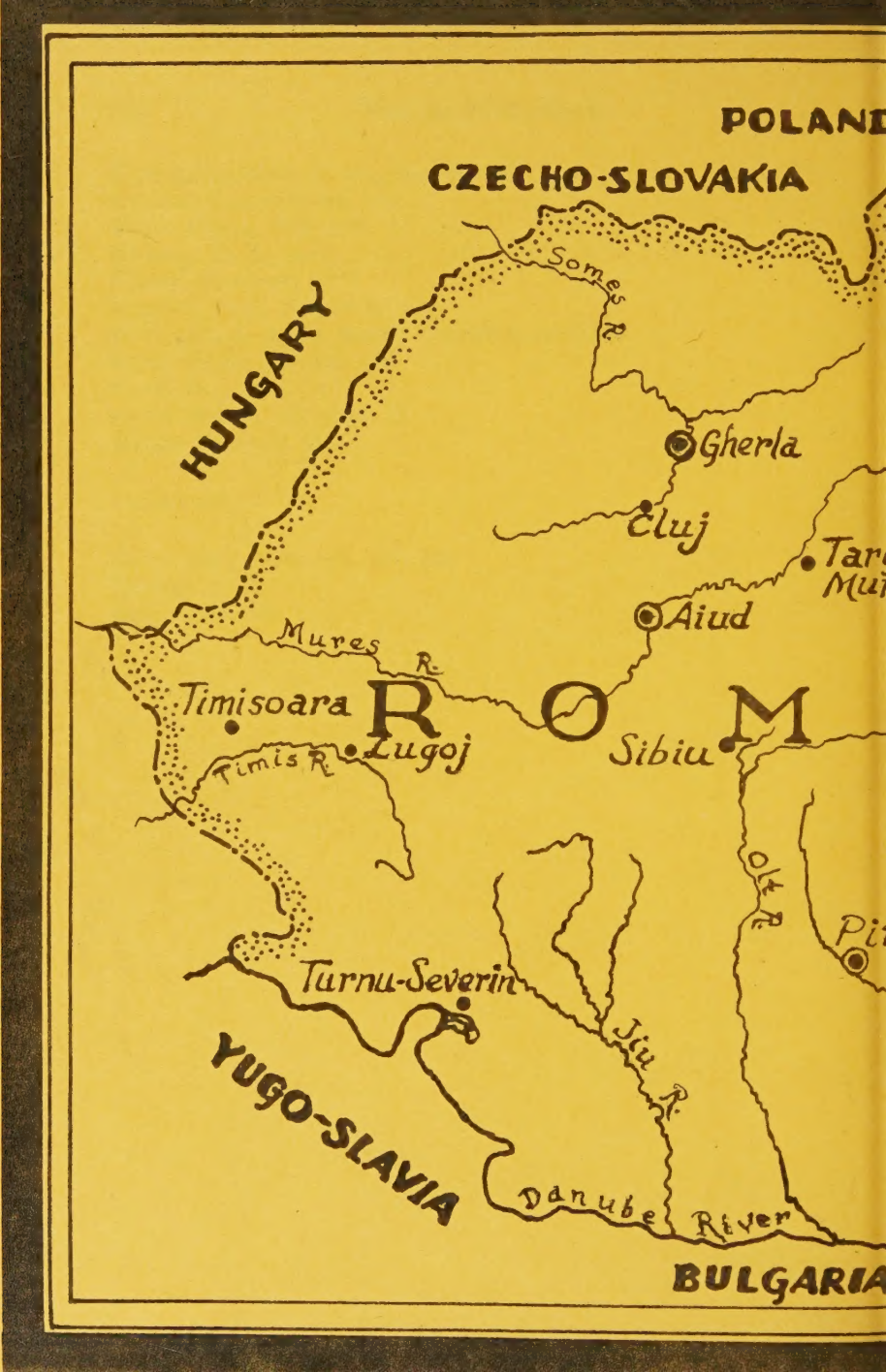
POLAND
CZECHO-SLOVAKIA
HUNGARY
Somes R.
Gherla
Cluj
Tar
Mu
Aiud
Mures R.
Timisoara
ROM
Lugoj
Timis R.
Sibiu
Olt R.
Pi
Turnu-Severin
Jiu R.
YUGO-SLAVIA
Danube River
BULGARIA

U.S.S.R.
Nistru R.
Siret R.
Iasi
Prut R.
Barlad R.
Bacau
Targu-
Ocna
N I A
Brasov
inaia
Ploesti
Tulcea
Danube R.
BUCHAREST
Cerna-
Voda
CANAL
Constanta
BLACK
SEA

The Western reader must understand that in his country too these things can happen with certainty, if apathy makes possible the inauguration of such a regime as that which caused the disaster in Romania. All they have to do is look at the so-called 'cultural revolution' in Mao's China, and at the public unmaskings — not of the *enemies* of the regime but of that regime's high echelon cadres. Or no one can affirm seriously that these 'self-criticisms' are the result of convictions that appeared overnight. We, sufferers under the Romanian regime, as administered by the Bolsheviks, know how these 'confessions' were extracted.

When the United States has progressed
to the point reached by Romania in
1948, there will be no place on earth
to which Americans can flee, and there will be
no one to hear their screams.

This book is a landmark in the broad field now designated by a term adapted from the Russian:

Psychopolitics